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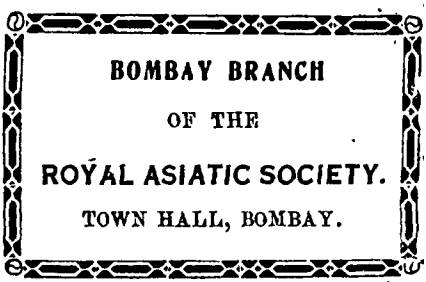

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ENGLISH ARTISTS

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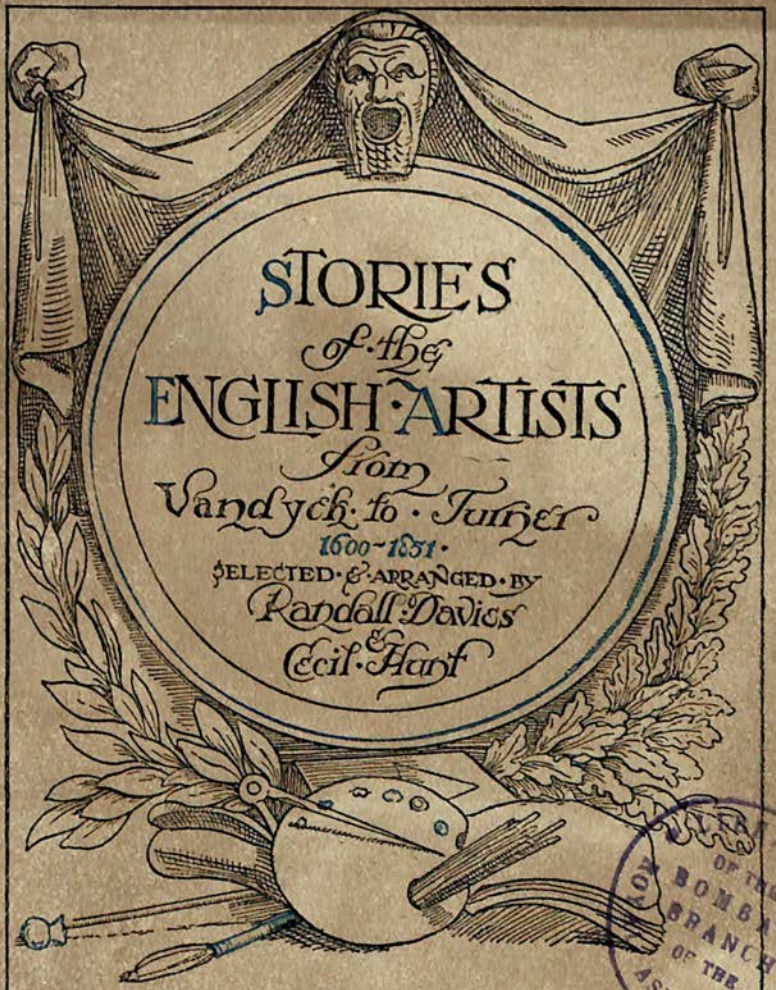
PORTRAIT OF THE COUNTESS OF OXFORD

(After the painting by John Hoppner: No. 900 in the National Gallery, London)



STORIES of the ENGLISH ARTISTS

From Vandyck to Turner

1600–1851

SELECTED & ARRANGED BY

Randall Davies

&

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The binding of this volume is adapted from a notable example by Roger Payne.

"There is no easy way of becoming a good painter."

Sir Joshua Reynolds.

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The title, on reverse of this page, is adapted from an engraved title by Bartolozzi.

PREFACE

THERE are numberless treatises wherein profound critical acumen is displayed in canvassing and contrasting the respective qualities, whether as artists or simply as craftsmen, of many of the masters, whose stories are briefly set forth in the following pages. Such works are designed for the student, the painter, the dilettante, and the connoisseur. This little volume has no such lofty aspirations. It is intended for the general reader, ignorant possibly of what is good or bad in art, but none the less interested to learn what manner of men they were who founded the art of painting in England or who worthily sustained the traditions of their greater predecessors. Accordingly in these slight biographical records the dominant theme is the man, not the painter; his work and its comparative value is merely incidental. Throughout, the chief interest lies in the trifling personal details, anecdotes, scraps of gossip, notes of conversations, and the like, which enable us to form some idea of the characters, habits, and thoughts of the painters to whom they relate.

The Stories make no pretence to being complete or exhaustive biographies. So few pages could be allotted to each artist, that out of a number of lengthy Memoirs our only course was to select the

striking or amusing incidents. If some of the Lives read more dully than others, we can but plead that in those cases the straw was wanting, and that without it we possess no greater aptitude for making bricks than the Israelites of old. The prosperous and dignified career of a Hoppner, for example, naturally gives far less opportunity to the biographer than the variegated rough-and-tumble existence of a Morland. Again, the records of a popular Court painter, whose studio is frequented by the wit and learning, no less than the rank and fashion, of the day, as a rule afford more material in the shape of incident or sparkling repartee than the scanty memoirs of a struggling landscape painter, buried in the country and almost unknown. In the days of which we write the latter was held of far less account than the limner of portraits. The painter of landscape was in many cases drawing-master first and painter afterwards, so little demand was there for landscape pure and simple. And we may reckon that the life of a drawing-master ekeing out a precarious existence by touching up the handiwork of young ladies of quality, who were brought up to regard a certain proficiency in drawing as a desirable "accomplishment," did not generally teem with incidents worthy of note. At all events, so exiguous are the available records of the early landscape painters who lived and worked before the genius of Turner shone forth in its full splendour, that, following the line of least resistance, we have dealt principally with the painters of portraits, historical subjects and genre, who, whatever their merits may be as compared with the merits of the painters of landscape, certainly left a stronger impression of their

personalities and importance upon the biographers of their day.

The inclusion of Vandyck, Lely, Kneller, Fuseli, Raeburn, and Wilkie as English artists possibly requires some comment. The first named four, though undoubtedly of foreign extraction, made this country the home of their adoption, and here they did their principal work, in England and for English patrons. In the case of Raeburn and Wilkie, if the same excuse is not allowed to serve, and if any patriotic Scotsman resents their being numbered among the English, we must defend ourselves by urging that Wilkie settled in London very early, and Raeburn rather late, in his career, and that both were prominent members of the English Royal Academy.

With the exception of Rowlandson, whose reputation is founded upon work in pen and ink and wash, and Turner, who was a master in nearly every medium, the artists selected painted chiefly, if not exclusively, in oil-colour. The stories of the painters in water-colour, a branch of art so thoroughly English in its origin and development, might well form the subject of a separate volume.

We claim no originality for our stories: they have all, with possibly one or two exceptions, appeared in print before, and in the Appendix will be found a list of the principal biographies and other sources from which they are culled. To the writers of those standard works we would render the fullest acknowledgment, and more especially to Allan Cunningham, so fitly termed "the Scottish Vasari." Upon his classic series of "Lives of British Painters" we have mainly depended for our

information. And it is only fair to add that we have frequently adopted without scruple the actual language of Cunningham and several of the other writers, to whom we are indebted, and that we have done so without distracting the reader by an over-abundance of quotation marks. On the other hand, in the interests of brevity, no sense of reverence has prevented us from compressing and abridging the prolixity of our informants, or from extracting the grain from what we were pleased to regard as chaff.

One word about our illustrations. The pictures reproduced herein were selected on various grounds —some as being magnificent specimens of art, others on account of their widespread popularity, and yet others because they seemed peculiarly amenable to the processes of reproduction. They are taken mainly from important works which have found a permanent resting-place in one or other of our public galleries. The difficulty of getting the owners of valuable paintings to lend their treasures for reproduction is one of the reasons why so few of the illustrations are from pictures in private collections. Another and possibly more weighty reason, is the decided preference of the public for an "old friend" rather than for an unfamiliar work, however masterly, a predilection of which we were bound to take cognisance in a work of this character.

C. A. H.

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PORTRAIT OF THE COUNTESS OF OXFORD (*after the painting by John Hoppner, R.A.*, 1759–1810, *No.* 900 *in the National Gallery, London*) . . . *Frontispiece*

On panel, 30 by 24 inches. Painted in 1797; exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1798; bequeathed to the Nation in 1873 by Lady Langdale, daughter of the sitter—Jane Elizabeth [born 1774, died 1824], daughter of the Rev. J. Scott, wife of Edward, fifth Earl of Oxford.

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STORIES
OF
ENGLISH ARTISTS

CHAPTER I

SIR ANTONY VANDYCK

1599–1641

THE inclusion of Vandyck among English painters needs little apology. According to his biographer, De Piles, he did the greatest number and most valuable of his performances in England, received all the encouragement in England which was due to his merit, lived here, married and died here, and therefore most deservedly ought to be placed in our School, of which De Piles adds somewhat quaintly, "he is the honour and indeed of the art itself."

Antony Vandyck, otherwise Antoon Van Dijck or Dyck, was born at Antwerp on March 22, 1599, the son of a well-to-do merchant, whose wife "was admired for painting flowers in small and for her needleworks in silk." An artist herself in the domain of embroidery, she swiftly recognised the signs of genius in her son, and began to instruct him in the ways of art from his earliest youth, watching over and rejoicing in the development of the boy's wonderful

powers until her untimely death, when he was only eight years old.

Parental discouragement of youthful artistic tendencies is not uncommon. But no such difficulties prevented Vandyck from following his bent. It was indeed his father's earnest wish that he should be trained as an artist, and with that end in view the lad was apprenticed in 1610, for a term of five years, to Hendrick van Balen, an historical painter.

Vandyck was sixteen years of age when his apprenticeship came to an end. He then set up for himself, and produced a series of heads of Christ and the Twelve Apostles, which attracted the attention of Rubens, who had just returned from Italy to find himself ranked as one of the first painters of the time. Authorities differ as to whether Vandyck was ever one of Rubens' pupils, though he certainly was employed to make drawings of the latter's pictures for the engravers. Further, in 1620, when Rubens received a commission for thirty large paintings, it was stipulated that a great part of the preliminary work, usually done by pupils, should be entrusted to Vandyck.

The following well-known anecdote also shows that at one period, either as pupil or assistant, he was working at Rubens' studio. It happened thus. The master, as was his custom after the morning's work, had gone for a country ride, leaving an unfinished picture on the easel. His students promptly seized the opportunity to indulge in some boisterous

horse-play about the room, and as ill-luck would have it one of these gay youths, striking at a companion with a maul-stick, threw down and damaged the picture, which was still wet. To the consternation of the delinquents, the throat and chin of the chief figure were ruined. The situation was critical. At last one of the bolder spirits suggested that Vandyck, who was painting in the adjoining room, should be called in and entreated to touch up the picture and repair the damage. Three hours of daylight remained, and before nightfall Vandyck had succeeded so well in restoring the part destroyed that his comrades decided to take the risk of it deceiving the master. Next morning Rubens contemplated his picture with evident satisfaction, exclaiming that he liked it far better than he had done the night before. A closer scrutiny, however, revealed the touch of a strange hand, and the whole story came out; but Rubens was so delighted with the skill shown by Vandyck, that he readily pardoned all concerned in the escapade.

In 1620, on the advice of Rubens, Vandyck was contemplating a visit to Italy to study the Italian masters, but the Duke of Arundel persuaded him to abandon this journey, and instead to try his fortunes in England. Very little is known of his first visit, and in 1622 we find Vandyck again on the Continent, painting portraits at The Hague.

Dr. Head tells an amusing story of the artist's visit to Frans Hals, which occurred about this time.

Vandyck, without mentioning his name, announced himself at Hals' studio as a wealthy stranger and patron, anxious to sit for his portrait, but with only two hours to spare. The painter was hurriedly fetched from a neighbouring tavern. "Canvas, colours, brushes were ready in an instant, and Hals fell upon his work with his wonted impetuosity. The two hours were not quite gone before the picture was ready for the sitter's inspection. He praised it highly, and professed an astonishment not altogether feigned at the speed of its execution. 'But,' said he, 'painting is doubtless an easier thing than I thought. Let us change places and see what I can do.' They changed places, and Hals soon saw that the man before him was no stranger to the tools he was handling. In vain he speculated who it could be. But when the second picture was finished, in still less time than the first, and proved to be not inferior in merit, the mystery was solved. Hals rushed at his guest, and clasped him round the neck in a fraternal hug. 'The man who can do that,' he cried, 'must be either Vandyck or the Devil.'"

Early in 1623 Vandyck set forth on his long-contemplated journey to Italy. We hear of him first at Venice, enraptured with the treasures of the Venetian galleries, filling his sketch-books with studies and copies of the masterpieces of Giorgione, Veronese, and Bellini, and above all of Titian, his chief delight and inspiration. When funds ran low he departed for Genoa, hoping to achieve wealth and honour, as

Sir Antony Van Dyck

DANÄE AND THE GOLDEN SHOWER

Hanfstaengl

Rubens had done some fifteen years before, among the merchant princes of that opulent city. Nor was he disappointed. To this day the galleries of Genoa bear witness to the commissions which poured in upon him from the wealthiest and noblest families. After leaving Genoa he stayed for a time at Rome, Florence, and Palermo, painting masterpieces in each city, before returning, in 1626, to his native town, where at first he was far from being overburdened with work.

With Rubens at his zenith, eclipsing all lesser lights, Vandyck, in spite of the splendid success of his foreign tour, found it almost impossible to gain the favour of the public. He was as one unknown, struggling for recognition. Indeed, he is said to have pointed out to his friend Teniers a certain fat brewer as his only patron! and even that commission came to nought. To the brewer the price of two pistoles for a portrait seemed sheer extortion, and the order was indignantly withdrawn. So for a year or two he fared indifferently at the hands of a populace blinded by the glory of Rubens; but success came at length, and commissions innumerable, when Rubens departed to the Courts of London and Madrid and left the field open to painters of less established reputation. Then for a while Vandyck basked in the full sun of prosperity, but his sensitive nature could not withstand the continuous and malicious attacks of his less fortunate rivals. Irritated past endurance by the innuendoes of jealous inferiors, he left his country and went to London, where he heard great favour was

shown to artists by King Charles. Curiously enough his arrival in England passed almost unnoticed. To his chagrin he failed to get the hoped for introduction to Court circles, and after a fruitless visit he returned once more to the Continent. But Charles soon learned what a treasure had been within his reach, and he ordered Sir Kenelm Digby, who had been painted by Vandyck, to invite the artist to England again. This was in 1632, and Vandyck returned in response to the royal invitation, to be received at Court with every mark of favour. Apartments were given him at Blackfriars, and a summer residence at Eltham, in Kent, and in a very short time his social gifts, and brilliant talents, made him the idol of London Society. The King himself sat to him, besides commanding portraits of the Queen and the royal family, and often came by water from Whitehall to see the work and enjoy the society of the fascinating painter.

In 1632 Vandyck received the honour of knighthood; shortly afterwards he was granted a life annuity of £200, besides being appointed Principal Painter in ordinary to their Majesties. These favours excited the jealousy of Mytens, then one of the lesser Court painters, who had been overshadowed by the new arrival, and in a year or two, chagrined by the rapid preferment of Vandyck, whose superiority he was forced to admit, he returned to The Hague, in spite of the kindly words of the King and his assurance that there was work enough for all. As a further mark of esteem Charles presented Vandyck with a

miniature of himself set in brilliants hung on a heavy gold chain, and this ornament always appears round the neck of the artist in his later portraits.

During the eight years that Sir Antony remained in England he produced over two hundred portraits.

There is probably no foundation for the statement that Rubens from motives of jealousy advised Vandyck to abandon historical pictures and apply himself to portraits. "If Rubens gave the advice in question," says Walpole, "he gave it with reason; not maliciously. Vandyck had a peculiar genius for portraits; his draperies are finished with a minuteness of truth not demanded in historic composition; besides, his invention was cold and tame, nor does he anywhere seem to have had much idea of the passions and their expression: portraits require none." In truth this was but a cold acknowledgment of the talents of one of the greatest painters of all time. Far truer is the appreciation of another biographer. "He has been equalled in freedom by Reynolds," says Cunningham, "and surpassed in the fascination of female loveliness by Lawrence, but no one has yet equalled him in manly dignity, in the rare and important gift of endowing his heads with power to think and act. With all his vigour, he has no violent attitudes, no startling postures, all is natural and graceful. Man in his noblest form and attitudes was ever present to his fancy; he strikes his subjects clearly and cleverly out; he disdains to retire into the darkness of backgrounds or to float away the body into

a cloud or a vapour. All his men are of robust intellect, for he is a painter of mind more than of velvet or silk, yet he throws a cloak over a cavalier with a grace few have attained. His ladies are inferior to his men; they seldom equal the fresh, innocent loveliness of nature."

Though fortune smiled upon Vandyck and gave him more work than he could carry out, he was frequently in pecuniary difficulties. He dressed richly, lived in luxurious style, and lavished hospitality on his friends and patrons, besides himself patronising musicians with singular liberality. His liaisons too —and he was never out of women's toils—made away with a large amount of his profits, and he frankly confessed as much to the King when Charles inquired if he ever had difficulty in finding a thousand pounds or two. "Yes indeed, Sire," was the response; "a man whose house is always open to his friends, and his purse to his mistresses, is likely to make acquaintance with empty coffers."

Unlike Rubens, Vandyck did not seek to repair his dwindled fortunes by the laboratory of his painting room, "but by that real folly," as Walpole terms it, "the pursuit of the Philosopher's Stone." His earnings swiftly vanished in supplying costly ingredients for the crucible, and a constitution already impaired by excess and a sedentary mode of life gave way still further to the noisome atmosphere and enervating excitement of the alchemist's laboratory. At length the King came to the rescue. His remedy was the simple

one of marriage, and in the hope of inducing Vandyck to lead a steadier life and to quit his chimerical researches he bestowed on him for a wife one of the Queen's household, Maria Ruthven, daughter of Lord Gowrie. This alliance does not seem to have attached Vandyck more strongly to the King, for soon after his marriage, ambitious possibly of vying with the glory of Rubens in the Luxembourg, Sir Antony went to Paris in the expectation of being employed to adorn the great gallery of the Louvre in a similar manner. But he was disappointed in this, the commission falling to the lot of Poussin, who was then deservedly the favourite of the French Court. After this rebuff Vandyck returned to England, still intent on executing some public work, and he proposed that the King should commission him to paint the walls of the banqueting-room at Whitehall (the ceiling of which was already adorned by Rubens) with the history and procession of the Order of the Garter. The proposal struck the King's taste, if one may judge from a small sketch in chiaroscuro for the procession, in which some portraits are distinguishable, but eventually it fell through—some say, owing to the extravagance of the price demanded by the painter, but more probably the cause was the impoverished state of the royal purse.

Shortly after these two disappointments Vandyck, whose health had long been failing, paid a visit to Antwerp, and for a time took over the management of Rubens' school. But his various maladies increased,

and he returned to his house in Blackfriars completely broken down, and there, in spite of the ministrations of the royal physicians, to whom the King had promised a fee of £300 if they succeeded in saving the artist's life, he died on December 9, 1641, at the age of forty-two.

Vandyck's method of painting is well described by De Piles. "He appointed," it is said, "a certain day and hour for the person he had to paint, and never worked longer than one hour at a time upon each portrait, whether in rubbing in or finishing; when his clock told the hour, he rose and made a bow to the sitter, as much as to say that enough was done for that day, and then arranged the day and hour for the next sitting, after which his servant came to prepare fresh brushes and palette, while he received another person to whom he had given an appointment. He thus worked at several portraits in one day with extraordinary expedition. After having lightly sketched the face, he put the sitter in an attitude which he had previously meditated, and with grey paper and black and white crayons he drew, in a quarter of an hour, the figure and drapery, which he arranged in a grand manner and with exquisite taste. He then handed over the drawing to skilful persons whom he had about him, to paint it from the sitter's own clothes, which were sent on purpose at Vandyck's request. The assistants having done their best with the draperies from nature, he went lightly over them, and soon produced by his genius the art and truth

which we there admire. As for the hands, he had in his employment persons of both sexes who acted as models."

Vandyck is said to have made the following excuse for the hasty and careless execution of his later portraits: "I worked a long time for my reputation; I do it now for my kitchen."

CHAPTER II

SIR PETER LELY

1618–1680

IT is generally supposed that Lely was born at Soest, in Westphalia, on September 14, 1618, where his father, a captain of Foot, was in garrison; but some authorities give the honour of his birthplace to Soest, by Amerfoort, near Utrecht, his mother's home. His father's real name was Vander Vaas; but from being born at The Hague in a perfumer's shop, which had a lily for its sign, he was generally known as Du Lys or Lely, which became the proper name of his son.

The boy received his first instructions in painting from Franz de Grebber at Haarlem, beginning with landscapes and historic figures less than life; but when he came to England in 1641 and saw the works of Vandyck he quitted his former style and former subjects, and gave himself wholly to portraits in emulation of his great predecessor. If Vandyck's portraits are often tame and spiritless, at least they are natural. Lely, however, inclined to the artificial, making his nymphs trail fringes and embroidery through meadows and purling streams. Further, while Vandyck's costumes are those of the times, Lely's are like fantastic night-gowns, fastened with a

single pin. The latter was in truth the ladies' painter; but whether the age improved in beauty or in flattery, Lely's women are certainly much handsomer than those of Vandyck. According to Pilkington, "Lely gave a very singular expression to the eyes of his female figures, a tender languishment, a look of blended sweetness and drowsiness, unattempted before his time by any master, which he certainly conceived to be graceful."

In 1647 the painter was introduced to Charles I., then captive in Hampton Court, where he painted a remarkable picture of the King with the youthful Duke of York. This picture, with the receipt for £30 given by the artist, is now in the possession of the Duke of Northumberland at Sion House.

Lely drew the rising sun, as well as the setting. His clients were as numerous during the Commonwealth as during the former régime, and among others he painted the stern-visaged Protector. "Mr. Lely," so Cromwell is reported to have said, "I desire you would use all your skill to paint my picture truly like me, and not flatter me at all; but remark all these roughnesses, pimples, warts, and everything as you see me, otherwise I never will pay a farthing for it."

After the Restoration Lely was advanced to high favour by Charles II., and was much patronised by the Court. In addition to his other work he received a commission from the Duchess of York to paint a series of Beauties, the first of which was a portrait of the Duchess herself, though we have Walpole's autho-

rity that she was a lady "pre-eminent in rank but not in beauty." There are several references to this series in Pepys' "Memoirs": "Walked to Lilley's the painter, where I saw the Duchess of York's her whole body, sitting in state, in a chair, in white satin; and another of the King not finished; most rare things." And again: "Went to Lely, the great painter—and then to see in what pomp his table was laid for *himself*, to go to dinner. He shewed me Lady Castlemaine's portrait, which is a *most blessed* picture, that I *must* have a copy of." About the same time, soon after the naval victory at Solebay, the Duke of York gave Lely a similar order to paint the portraits of the Admirals, or Flagmen, as they are called by Pepys. "To Mr. Leley's, and there saw the heads some finished, and all begun, of the Flagmen in the late great fight with the Duke of York against the Dutch. The Duke has them done to hang up in his chamber, and very finely done they are indeed." But Pepys admired the painter rather than the man. In 1666 he writes: "Called at Mr. Lilley's, who was working; and indeed his pictures are much above Hayls's, but a mighty proud man he is and full of state." That his time was fully occupied we gather from another entry of the diarist: "With Commissioner Pett to Mr. Lilley's, the great painter, who came forth to us; but believing that I came forth to bespeak a picture, he prevented it by telling us that he should not be at leisure these three weeks, which methinks is a rare thing."

Peter Lely *Mansell*

NELL GWYNNE

It was the artist's habit to paint from nine o'clock in the morning until four in the afternoon, when he frequently gave a splendid entertainment to his friends. He had a rule which was invariably observed without regard to the quality of the sitter. A domestic took down the name, and appointed the day upon which the lord or lady had fixed; and if the appointment was not kept, no consideration could induce the artist to replace the name, excepting at the bottom of the list. It may nevertheless admit of a doubt, whether the beautiful and haughty ladies of Charles the Second's Court would have submitted to such a regulation without a murmur; or whether he relaxed, after Gascar and Kneller had become formidable rivals.

Until the coming of Godfrey Kneller, whose merits Lely fully appreciated, his position had not been endangered.

When a nobleman once said to Lely: "How is it that you have so great a reputation, when you know, as well as I do, that you are no painter?" "True, but I am the best you have," was the answer. Lely, however, was a painter of considerable merit. His colour, always pearly and refined, is often charming, and he understood well the treatment of landscape as background. His obvious failing is the family likeness, closer than that of sisters, which forbids our relying on his pictures as portraits.

Vandyck in his later work originated the custom of making alterations in the dress of his sitters, loosening whatever was stiff and formal, and such deviations

from matter of fact were carried even further by Lely, particularly in his portraits of ladies. The latter adopted an elegant, but impossible, undress, accentuating the voluptuous expression at which he aimed, either to please a dissolute Court, or because it pleased himself—possibly for both reasons.

In 1679 he was knighted by Charles II., and in the same year married a beautiful English woman of family. When in town Sir Peter lived in Drury Lane, but he also had a summer residence at Kew, and in both houses was renowned for his lavish entertainments.

So constant was his employment, that he was prevented from studying at the great schools of painting on the Continent, but, as one of his biographers puts it, "he made himself amends collecting the best drawings, prints, and paintings of the most celebrated Italian masters." And in truth his collection of works of art was quite magnificent, including, as it did, some which had once belonged to Vandyck and the Earl of Arundel, and others which came from the Duke of Buckingham's gallery, then being gradually dispersed by his son, the younger Villiers. These pictures, after Sir Peter's death, were sold by auction, the sale lasting for forty days, and producing, it is said, £26,000. The drawings may be known by the collector's initials P. L. The advantage he reaped from this collection appears, according to one authority, "from that admirable style which he acquired by daily conversing with the works of those masters."

During his last years Sir Peter's practice suffered considerably from Kneller's rapid and ever-increasing success as a portrait-painter. "Descamps is so weak," writes Walpole, "as to impute Lely's death to his jealousy of Kneller, though he owns it was almost sudden; an account which is almost nonsense, especially as he adds that Lely's physician, who knew not the cause of his malady, heightened it by repetitions of Kneller's success. It was an extraordinary kind of sudden death!"

Sir Peter Lely died of an apoplexy as he was drawing the Duchess of Somerset, on November 30, 1680, in the sixty-third year of his age. He was buried in the church of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, where is a monument with his bust, carved by Gibbons, and a Latin epitaph written by Flatman.

CHAPTER III

SIR GODFREY KNELLER

1646–1723

Of the few men of genius who flourished in the time of William and Mary, the chief was Sir Godfrey Kneller, a man lessened by his own reputation, as he chose to make it subservient to fortune. It has been said that Kneller preferred portrait-painting for this reason. "Painters of history," said he, "make the dead live, and do not begin to live themselves till they are dead; I paint the living, and they enable me to live."

Had he lived in a country where his merit had been rewarded according to the worth of his productions, instead of the number, he might have shone in the roll of the greatest masters; but he united the highest vanity with the most consummate negligence of character—at least, where he offered one picture to fame, he sacrificed twenty to lucre; and he met with customers of so little judgment, that they were fond of being painted by a man who would gladly have disowned his works the moment they were paid for. Ten Sovereigns sat to him—Charles II., James II. and his Queen, William and Mary, Anne, George I., Louis XIV., Peter the Great, and the Emperor Charles VI.

For the last portrait Leopold created Kneller Knight of the Roman Empire; by Anne he was made a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber; and by the University of Oxford, a Doctor. When he had finished the picture of Louis XIV., that prince asked him what mark of his esteem would be most agreeable to him? He answered modestly and genteely that if his Majesty would bestow a quarter of an hour on him, that he might make a drawing of his head for himself, he should think it the highest honour he could possibly receive. The King complied, and the painter drew him.

Not one of these Sovereigns discovered that he was fit for more than preserving their likeness. We, however, who see King William, the Czar Peter, Marlborough, Newton, Dryden, Godolphin, Somers, the Duchess of Grafton, Lady Ranelagh, and so many ornaments of an illustrious age transmitted to us by Kneller's pencil, must not regret that his talent was confined to portraits. Perhaps the treasure is greater than if he had decorated the chambers of Hampton Court with the wars of Æneas or the enchanted palace of Armida; and when one considers how seldom great masters are worthily employed, it is better to have real portraits than Madonnas without end. What Sir Godfrey could have produced must not be judged by the historic picture of King William in the palace just mentioned: it is a tame and poor performance. But the original sketch of it at Houghton is struck out with a spirit and fire equal to Rubens. The hero and

the horse are in the heat of battle; in the large piece it is the king riding in triumph, with his usual phlegm.

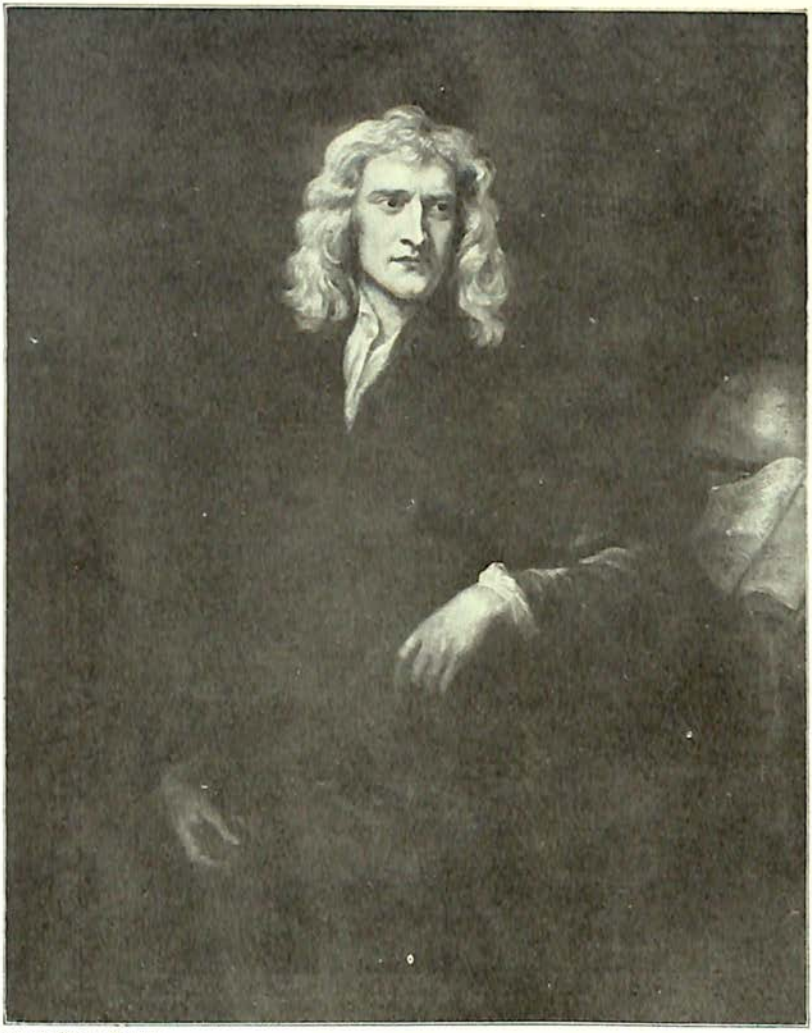
Of all his works, Sir Godfrey was most proud of the converted Chinese at Windsor; but his portrait of Gibbons was superior to it. It has the freedom and nature of Vandyck, with the harmony of colouring peculiar to Andrea Sacchi, and no part of it is neglected. In general, even where he took pains, all the parts are affectedly kept down, to throw the greater force into the head—a trick unworthy so great a master. His draperies, too, are so carelessly finished, that they resemble no silk or stuff the world ever saw. His airs of heads have extreme grace; the hair admirably disposed, and if the locks seem unnaturally elevated, it must be considered as an instance of the painter's art. He painted in an age when the women erected edifices of three storeys on their heads. Had he represented such preposterous attire, in half a century his works would have been ridiculous. To lower their dress to a natural level when the eye was accustomed to pyramids would have shocked their prejudices and diminished the resemblance. He took a middle way, and weighed out ornament to them with more natural materials. Still it must be owned there is too great a sameness in his airs, and no imagination at all in his compositions. See but a head, and it interests you; uncover the rest of the canvas, you wonder faces so expressive could be employed so insipidly. In truth, the age demanded nothing correct, nothing complete. Capable of tasting the power of Dryden's

numbers, and the majesty of Kneller's heads, it overlooked doggerel and daubing. What pity that men of fortune are not blest with such a pen or such a pencil! That a genius must write for a bookseller, or paint for an alderman!

Sir Godfrey Kneller was born at Lubeck in 1646. He was at first designed for a military life, and was sent to Leyden, where he applied himself to mathematics and fortification; but the predominance of nature determining him to paint, his father acquiesced, and sent him to Amsterdam, where he studied under Bol, and had some instructions from Rembrandt. It is said, too, that one of his masters was Francis Hals. It is certain that Kneller had no servility of a disciple, nor imitated any of them. Even in Italy, whither he went in 1672, he mimicked no peculiar style, nor even at Venice, where he resided most and was esteemed and employed by some of the first families, and where he drew Cardinal Bassadonna. If he caught anything, it was instructions, not hints. If there is the least resemblance in his works to any other master, it is in some of his earliest works in England, and those his best, to Tintoret. A portrait at Houghton of Joseph Carreras, a poet and chaplain to Catherine of Lisbon, has the force and simplicity of that master, without owing part of its merit to Tintoret's universal black drapery, to his own afterwards neglected draperies, or to his master Rembrandt's unnatural chiaroscuro. Latterly he was thought to give in to the manner of Rubens; and

this is apparent in the sketch of King William's equestrian figure, evidently imitated from Rubens' design of the ceiling for the banqueting-room (at Whitehall), which was for some time in Kneller's possession. The latter had no more of Rubens' rich colouring than of Vandyck's delicacy in habits; but he had more beauty than Vandyck, and more dignity than Sir Peter Lely.

The latter felt his capacity in a memorable instance; Kneller and his brother (Zacchary) came to England in 1674, without intending to reside here, but to return through France to Venice. They were recommended to Mr. Banks, a Hamburg merchant, and Godfrey drew him and his family. The pictures pleased. Mr. Vernon, secretary to the Duke of Monmouth, saw them, and sat to the new painter, and obtained his master's picture by the same hand. The Duke was so charmed that he engaged the King, his father, to sit to Kneller at a time that the Duke of York had been promised the King's picture by Lely. Charles, unwilling to have double trouble, proposed that both the artists should draw him at the same time. Lely, as an established master, chose the light he liked; the stranger was to draw the picture as he could, and performed it with such facility and expedition, that his piece was in a manner finished when Lely's was only dead-coloured. The novelty pleased —yet Lely deserved most honour, for he did justice to his new competitor: confessed his abilities, and the likeness. This success fixed Kneller here. The



Sir Godfrey Kneller

SIR J. NEWTON

series of his portraits proves the continuance of his reputation.

Charles II. sent him to Paris to draw Louis XIV., but died during his absence. The successor was equally favourable to him, and was actually sitting for his picture for Secretary Pepys, when he received the news that the Prince of Orange was landed. King William distinguished Kneller still more; for that prince he painted the beauties at Hampton Court—at least they were painted in his reign, but the thought was the Queen's, during one of his absences, and contributed much to make her unpopular. The famous Lady Dorchester advised the Queen against it, saying, "Madam, if the King was to ask for the portraits of all the wits in his Court, would not the rest think he called them fools?"

Kneller was knighted by William in 1692, with the additional present of a gold medal and chain costing £300, and for him Sir Godfrey drew the portrait of the Czar; and for Queen Anne he painted the King of Spain, afterwards Charles VI.—so poor a performance that one would think he felt the fall from Peter to Charles. His works in the Gallery of Admirals (seven by Kneller, the rest by Dahl) were done in the same reign, and several of them worthy so noble a memorial. The Kit-Cat Club, generally mentioned as a set of wits, in reality the patriots that saved Britain, were Kneller's last works in Queen Anne's reign, and his last public work. He lived to draw George I., was made a baronet by him, and con-

tinued to paint during the greater part of his reign. But in 1722 he was seized with a violent fever, and died in the following year. His body lay in state, and was buried at Witton, but a monument (executed by Rysbrach, for which he left £300) was erected in Westminster Abbey, where his friend Mr. Pope, as if to gratify an extravagant vanity dead, which he had ridiculed living, bestowed on him a translation of Raphael's epitaph—as high a compliment as even poetry could be allowed to pay to the original, a silly hyperbole when applied to the modern.

This was not the only instance in which the poet incensed [burnt incense to] the painter. Sir Godfrey had drawn for him the statues of Apollo, Venus, and Hercules; Pope paid for them with these lines—

> What god, what genius did the pencil move,
> When Kneller painted these!
> 'Twas friendship, warm as Phœbus, kind as love,
> And strong as Hercules.

He was in the right to suppress them—what idea does muscular friendship convey? It was not the same warmth of friendship that made Pope put Kneller's vanity to the strongest trial imaginable. The former laid a wager that there was no flattery so gross but his friend would swallow. To prove it, Pope said to him as he was painting, "Sir Godfrey, I believe if the Almighty had had your assistance, the world would have been formed more perfect." "Indeed, sir," replied Kneller, "I believe so." This answer was not extraordinary in the latter—his conversation on religion

was extremely free, his paraphrase on a particular text of Scripture, singular. "In my Father's house are many mansions," which Sir Godfrey interpreted thus: "At the day of Judgment," said he, "the Almighty will examine mankind on their different professions: to one He will say, Of what sect was you? I was a Papist. Go you there. What was you? A Protestant. Go you there. And you? A Turk. Go you there. And you, Sir Godfrey? I was of no sect. Then He will say, Sir Godfrey, choose your place."

His wit was ready, his *bon-mots* deservedly admired. In Great Queen Street he lived next door to Dr. Ratcliffe. Kneller was fond of flowers, and had a fine collection. As there was a great intimacy between him and the physician, he permitted the latter to have a door into his garden, but Ratcliffe's servants gathering and destroying the flowers, Kneller sent him word he must shut up the door. Ratcliffe replied peevishly, "Tell him he may do anything with it but paint it." "And I," answered Sir Godfrey, "can take anything from him but physic."

Sir Godfrey at Witton was Justice of the Peace, and was so much more swayed by equity than law, that his judgments, accompanied with humour, are said to have occasioned those lines by Pope—

> I think Sir Godfrey should decide the suit,
> Who sent the thief (that stole the cash) away
> And punish'd him that put it in his way.

This alluded to his dismissing a soldier who had stolen a joint of meat, and accused the butcher of

having tempted him by it. Whenever Sir Godfrey was applied to to determine what parish a poor man belonged to, he always inquired what parish was the richer, and settled the poor man there; nor would he ever sign a warrant to distrain the goods of a poor man who could not pay a tax. These instances showed the goodness of his heart; others, even in his capacity of Justice, his peculiar turn. A handsome young woman came before him; struck with her beauty, he continued examining her as he sat painting, till he had taken her likeness. If he disliked interruptions, he would not be interrupted. Seeing a constable coming to him at the head of a mob, he called to him, without inquiring into the affair, "Mr. Constable, you see that turning; go that way, and you will find an alehouse, the sign of the King's Head—go, and make it up."

Kneller married Susannah Cawley, daughter of the rector of Henley-on-Thames. She outlived him, and was buried at Henley, where are monuments to her and her father. Kneller had amassed a great fortune, though he lived magnificently, and lost £20,000 in the South Sea Bubble; yet he had an estate of near £2000 a year left. Part he bequeathed to his wife, and entailed the rest on Godfrey Huckle, his daughter's son, with orders that he should assume the name of Kneller. At his seat at Witton there were many of his own works sold some years after his death. He intended that Sir James Thornhill should

paint the staircase there, but hearing that Sir Isaac Newton was sitting to Thornhill, he was offended, and said that no portrait-painter should paint his house, and employed Laguerre.

Pope was not the only bard that soothed the painter's vainglory. Dryden repaid him for a present of Shakespeare's picture with a copy of verses full of luxuriant but immortal touches; the most beautiful of Addison's poems was addressed to him; Prior complimented Kneller on the Duke of Ormond's picture; Steele wrote a poem to him at Witton; Tickell, another. Can one wonder a man was vain who had been flattered by Dryden, Addison, Prior, Pope, and Steele?

CHAPTER IV

WILLIAM HOGARTH

1697–1764

WILLIAM HOGARTH was born in the parish of St. Bartholomew the Great on the 10th December 1697. He was a descendant of the family of yeomen called Hogard, Hogart, or Hogarth of Kirkby-Thore, in the county of Westmorland, his father being Richard Hogarth, who was educated at the school of St. Bees, and carried thence his learning to the market of the great metropolis. From the painter's manuscripts it would appear that his father's learning was of no great service to him: he had written a volume of about four hundred pages as an addition to Littleton's "Latin Dictionary," and obtained testimonials to its usefulness and merit from some of the greatest scholars in England, Scotland, and Ireland. He submitted it to a bookseller with the intention of printing it, but delays took place, and the work was finally withdrawn and laid aside. "I saw the difficulties," says William, "under which my father laboured; the many difficulties he endured from his dependence, living chiefly on his pen, and the cruel treatment he met with from booksellers and printers. I had before my eyes the precarious situation of men

of classical education; it was therefore conformable to my own wishes that I was taken from school and served a long apprenticeship to a silver-plate engraver." "As I had naturally a good eye and fondness for drawing," he continues, in relating the circumstances of his choice of a profession, "*shows* of all sorts gave me uncommon pleasure when young, and mimicry, common to all children, was remarkable in me. An early access to a neighbouring painter drew my attention from play, and I was at every possible opportunity employed in making drawings. I picked up an acquaintance of the same turn, and soon learnt to draw the alphabet with great correctness. My exercises when at school were more remarkable for the ornaments which adorned them than for the exercise itself. In the former I soon found that blockheads with better memories would soon surpass me, but for the latter I was particularly distinguished." But he soon tired of his apprenticeship. "I soon found," he says, "this business in every respect too limited. The paintings of St. Paul's and Greenwich Hospital which were at that time going on ran in my head, and I determined that silver-plate engraving should be followed no longer than necessity obliged me to it. Engraving on copper was at twenty years of age my utmost ambition. To attain this it was necessary that I should learn to draw objects something like nature, instead of the monsters of heraldry, and the common methods of study were much too tedious for one who loved his

pleasure and came so late for it, for the time necessary to learn in the usual mode would leave me none to spare for the ordinary enjoyments of life. This led me to considering whether a shorter road than that usually travelled was not to be found. The early part of my life had been employed in a business rather detrimental than advantageous to those branches of art which I wished to pursue and have since professed. I had learned by practice to copy with tolerable correctness in the ordinary way, but it occurred to me that there were many disadvantages attending this method of study, as having faulty originals, &c.; and even when the pictures or prints to be imitated were by the best masters, it was little more than pouring water out of one vessel into another.

"Many reasons led me to wish that I could find the shorter path—fix forms and characters in my mind—and instead of copying the lines, try to read the language, and if possible find the grammar of the art by bringing into one focus the various observations I had made, and then trying by my power on the canvas how far my plan enabled me to combine and apply them to practice. For this purpose I considered what various ways and to what different purposes the memory might be applied, and fell upon one most suitable to my situation and idle disposition; laying it down first as an axiom that he who could by any means acquire and retain in his memory perfect ideas of the subjects he meant to draw, would have as clear a knowledge of the figure as a man who

William Hogarth *Hanfstaengl*

CALAIS GATE

can write freely hath of the twenty-five letters of the alphabet and their infinite combinations.

"I had one material advantage over my competitors, viz. the early habit I acquired of retaining in my mind's eye, without coldly copying it, on the spot, whatever I intended to imitate. Sometimes, but too seldom, I took the life for correcting the parts I had not perfectly enough remembered, and then I transferred them into my own compositions. Instead of burdening the memory with musty rules or tiring the eye with copying dry or damaged pictures, I have ever found studying from nature the shortest and safest way of obtaining knowledge in my art. A choice of composition was the next thing to be considered, and my constitutional idleness naturally led me to the use of such materials as I had previously collected, and to this I was further induced by thinking that if properly combined, they might be the most useful to society in painting, although similar subjects had often failed in writing and preaching."

From a mind so formed, a hand so diligent, and a spirit so observing, it was natural to expect something striking and original. Of his first attempt at satire the following story is related by Nichols, who had it from one of Hogarth's fellow-workmen. One summer Sunday during his apprenticeship he went with three companions to Highgate, and the weather being warm and the way dusty, they went into a public-house and called for ale. There happened to

be other customers in the house, who to free drinking added fierce talking, and a quarrel ensued. One of them on receiving a blow with the bottom of a quart pot looked so ridiculously rueful that Hogarth snatched out a pencil and sketched him as he stood. It was very like and very laughable, and contributed to the restoration of order and good-humour. On another occasion he strolled with Hayman, the painter, into a cellar, where two women of loose life were quarrelling in their cups. One of them filled her mouth with brandy and spirted it dexterously in the eyes of her antagonist. "See! see!" said Hogarth, taking out his tablets and sketching her; "look at the brimstone's mouth." This virago figures in "The Midnight Modern Conversation."

Hogarth's youth was spent in comparative poverty. "Owing," he says, "to my desire to qualify myself for engraving on copper, and to the loss which I sustained by piratical copies of some of my early and most popular prints, I could do little more than maintain myself until I was near thirty; but even then I was a punctual paymaster." Nichols relates of him, that being one day distressed to raise so trifling a sum as twenty shillings, in order to be revenged of his landlady who strove to compel him to payment he drew her as ugly as possible, and in that single portrait gave marks of the dawn of superior genius. Other authorities intimate that had such an accident ever happened to Hogarth he would hardly have failed to talk of it afterwards,

as he was always fond of contrasting the necessities of his youth with the affluence of his maturer age. "I remember the time," he has been heard to say, "when I have gone moping into the city with scarce a shilling, but as soon as I have received ten guineas there for a plate, I have returned home, put on my sword, and sallied out again with all the confidence of a man who had thousands in his pockets." Though Hogarth in his earlier years used both the crayon and the brush, he was still little known except as an engraver. An upholsterer named Morris, indeed, engaged him in 1727 to make a design for tapestry, and on discovering that he had engaged an engraver instead of a painter, refused to pay for it. Hogarth sued him, but lost his case. "I was informed by Mr. Hogarth," said Morris when the trial came on before the Lord Chief Justice, "that he was skilled in painting, and could execute the design of 'The Element of the Earth' in a workmanlike manner. On learning, however, afterwards that he was an engraver and not a painter, I became uneasy, and sent one of my servants to him, who stated my apprehensions, to which Mr. Hogarth replied that it was certainly a bold and unusual kind of undertaking, and if Mr. Morris did not like it when finished, he should not be asked to pay for it. The work was completed and sent home, but my tapestry-workers, who are mostly foreigners, and some of them the finest hands in Europe, and perfect judges of performances of that nature, were all of opinion that it

was not finished in a workmanlike manner, and that it was impossible to execute tapestry from it."

By labouring for the booksellers, and by designing and etching little scenes of town life and folly, Hogarth succeeded in gradually withdrawing himself from the drudgery of his original profession, and in establishing a name with the world for satiric skill and dramatic sketching. But the prices he obtained were small, so little indeed compared with what others received then, and what he was afterwards paid, that he seems ashamed to mention them. He could not disguise from himself that artists of very inferior powers, but of more courtly address, were growing rich by painting portraits of the opulent and the vain, and lived in splendour and affluence. Kent, the architect and painter, seems to have fixed, if he did not merit, Hogarth's peculiar indignation. This man had painted an altar-piece for St. Clement's Church, sufficiently absurd in itself for all the purposes of ridicule; but Hogarth was not satisfied till he had increased the public merriment by a caricature. No wonder that Hogarth was indignant at the popularity of such a pretender in painting as Kent, who, not content with the fame of an architect and ornamental gardener, aspired also to the merits of sculpture. For his popularity we have the words of Walpole: "He was not only consulted for furniture, as frames of pictures, glasses, tables, chairs, &c., but for plate, for a barge, for a cradle. And so impetuous was his fashion, that two great ladies prevailed upon him to make designs

for their birthday gowns. The one he dressed in a petticoat decorated with columns of the five orders, and the other like a bronze, in a copper-coloured satin, with ornaments of gold."

The unsparing ridicule which Hogarth threw on this person was very acceptable to Sir James Thornhill, who found Kent, in his fourfold capacity of painter, sculptor, architect, and ornamental gardener, a rival that met him at every turn. Hogarth had attended at Thornhill's academy in St. Martin's Lane, but his time there was wasted in controversies with his brother-students on the propriety of studying art from paintings or from nature. In the acrimony of disputation he learned to despise the former too much, and declaimed vigorously against borrowed postures and academic groups. "The most original mind," he said, "if habituated to these exercises, becomes inoculated with the spirit of others, and loses the power of stamping a spirit of its own on canvas." On this theme he was fluent and bitter; but he was amused with the following retort of one of his brethren: "Hogarth, by the doctrine which you preach and practise, it seems that the only way to draw well is not to draw at all; and I suppose if you wrote on the art of swimming, you would not permit your scholars to go into the water—until they had learnt."

He had, however, other motives than an artist's for courting the notice of Sir James Thornhill and frequenting his academy. To what their intimacy amounted previously we know not; but in 1730,

Hogarth, then in his thirty-third year, married Jane, the only daughter of Sir James, aged twenty-one. The match was neither hasty nor imprudent on the side of the lady; but it was accomplished without the consent of the parents, and her father was offended. The old man's wrath was of two years' duration, after which he was mollified by the entreaties of his wife, the submissiveness of his daughter, and above all by the rising reputation of Hogarth, who set himself diligently to work in the hope of being able to maintain his wife in such fashion as became her. He resolved to be wise and prudent, laid aside his satiric designs, took a house in Leicester Fields, and commenced portrait-painter.

To be eminently popular in portrait-painting requires more than merely skill and talent. Hogarth was a man of plain manners and unpolished address, and encumbered with the dangerous reputation of a satirist. He was unacquainted with the art of charming a peer into a patron by putting him into raptures with his own good looks. His own account of this part of his life is brief and modest. "I married," he says, "and commenced painter of small conversation pieces from twelve to fifteen inches high. This having novelty succeeded for a few years. But though it gave somewhat more scope for the fancy, it was still but a less kind of drudgery; and as I could not bring myself like some of my brethren and make it a sort of manufactory to be carried on by the help of backgrounds and drapery painters, it was not

sufficiently profitable to pay the expenses my family required." But this is a very imperfect account of his labours as a portrait-painter; he seems unwilling to dwell on a department wherein he was not quite successful, and he hastens to the compositions to which he owes his immortality. It would, however, be unjust to his memory to pass over the matter so lightly, for in truth some of his portraits are very vigorous performances.

His portraits of himself are all very clever, and all very like. In one he is accompanied by a bull-dog of the true English breed; and in another he is seated in his study, with his pencil ready, and his eye fixed and intent on a figure which he is sketching on the canvas. His portrait of Henry Fielding, executed after death from recollection, is remarkable as being the only likeness extant of the prince of English novelists. It has various histories. According to Murphy, Fielding had made many promises to sit to Hogarth, for whose genius he had a high esteem, but died without fulfilling them; a lady accidentally cut a profile with her scissors, which recalled Fielding's face so completely to Hogarth's memory, that he took up the outline, corrected and finished it, and made a capital likeness. The world is seldom satisfied with a common account of anything that interests it, more especially as a marvellous one is easily manufactured. The following, then, is the second history. Garrick, having dressed himself in a suit of Fielding's clothes, presented himself unexpectedly before

the artist, mimicking the step and assuming the look of their deceased friend. Hogarth was much affected at first, but on recovering, took his pencil and drew the portrait. For those who love a soberer history, the third edition is ready. Mrs. Hogarth, when questioned concerning it, said that she remembered the affair well; her husband began the picture—and finished it—one evening in his own house, and sitting by her side.

It happened, in the early part of Hogarth's life, that a nobleman, who was uncommonly ugly and deformed, came to sit to him for his picture. It was executed with a skill that did honour to the artist's abilities, but the likeness was rigidly observed. The peer, disgusted at this counterpart of his dear self, never once thought of paying for a reflector that would only insult him with his deformities. Some time was suffered to elapse before the artist applied for his money, but all applications for payment were fruitless. The painter, however, at last hit upon this expedient. It was couched in the following card: "Mr. Hogarth's dutiful respects to Lord ——; finding that he does not mean to have the picture which was drawn for him, is informed again of Mr. H.'s necessity for the money; if therefore his lordship does not send it in three days, it will be disposed of with the addition of a tail, and some other little appendages, to Mr. Hare, the famous wild-beast man, Mr. H. having given that gentleman a conditional promise of it for an exhibition picture on his lord-

ship's refusal." This intimation had the desired effect. The picture was sent home and committed to the flames.

"For the portrait of Garrick as Richard III.," Hogarth says, "I received more than any English artist ever before received for a single portrait, and that too by the sanction of several painters who were consulted about the price. Notwithstanding all this, the current remark was that portraits were not my province, and I was tempted to abandon the only lucrative branch of the art; for the practice brought the whole nest of phyzmongers on my back, where they buzzed like so many hornets. All those people had their friends, whom they incessantly taught to call my women harlots, my essay on beauty borrowed, and my engraving contemptible. This so much disgusted me, that I sometimes declared I would never paint another portrait, and frequently refused when applied to; for I found, by mortifying experience, that whoever will succeed in this branch must adopt the mode recommended in Gay's Fables, and make divinities of all who sit to him. Whether or not this childish affectation will ever be done away is a doubtful question; none of those who have attempted to reform it have yet succeeded; nor unless portrait-painters in general become more honest and their customers less vain is there much reason to expect they ever will. . . ."

Soon after his marriage Hogarth designed and etched the first portion of "The Harlot's Progress,"

which was so much to the gratification of Lady Thornhill that she advised her daughter to place it in her father's way. "Accordingly one morning," says Nichols, "Mrs. Hogarth conveyed it secretly into his dining-room. When he rose, he inquired from whence it came, and by whom it was brought. When he was told, he cried out, 'Very well! Very well! The man who can make works like this can maintain a wife without a portion.' He designed this remark as an excuse for keeping his purse-strings close, but soon after became both reconciled and generous to the young people."

"The reasons which induced me to adopt this mode of designing," says Hogarth in reference to these subjects of a modern kind and moral nature, "were that I thought both critics and painters had, in the historical style, quite overlooked that intermediate species of subjects which may be placed between the sublime and the grotesque. I therefore wished to compose pictures on canvas similar to representations on the stage; and further hope that they will be tried by the same test, and criticised by the same criterion. Let it be observed that I mean to speak only of those scenes where the human species are actors, and these, I think, have not often been delineated in a way of which they are worthy and capable.

"In these compositions, those subjects that will both entertain and inform the mind bid fair to be of the greatest public utility, and must, therefore, be

entitled to rank in the highest class. If the execution is difficult, though that is but a secondary merit, the author has claims to a higher degree of praise. If this be admitted, comedy in painting, as well as in writing, ought to be allotted the first place, as most capable of all these perfections, though the sublime, as it is called, has been opposed to it. Ocular demonstration will carry more conviction to the mind of a sensible man than all he would find in a thousand volumes, and this has been attempted in the prints I have composed. Let the decision be left to any unprejudiced eye; let the figures in either pictures or prints be considered as players, dressed either for the sublime, for genteel comedy or farce, for high or low life. I have endeavoured to treat my subjects as a dramatic writer; my picture is my stage, my men and women my players, who by means of certain actions and gestures are to exhibit a dumb show."

Hogarth, whose poverty had hitherto detained him in town, was now rich enough to take summer lodgings at Lambeth Terrace. While residing there he became intimate with the proprietors of Vauxhall Gardens, and embellished them with designs. He drew the "Four Parts of the Day," which Hayman copied; the two scenes of "Evening and Night," with portraits of Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn. For this assistance, which seems to have been gratuitous, the proprietor presented him with a gold ticket of admission for himself and a friend, which he enjoyed long, and his wife after him.

Among the manuscript notes left by Hogarth, in which he recorded the feelings of his early days and the notions which he entertained in art, there is a short account of his labours as an historical painter. It cannot be commended for candour; and it exhibits the levity of a man who was so pleased with success of another sort, that he thought much too lightly of works which the ablest find some difficulty in performing. "I entertained some thoughts," he writes, "of succeeding in what the puffers of books call the great style of history painting; so that without having had a stroke of this grand business before, I quitted small portraits and familiar conversations, and with a smile at my own temerity commenced history painter, and on a great staircase at St. Bartholomew's Hospital painted two Scripture stories, "The Pool of Bethesda" and "The Good Samaritan," with figures seven feet high. These I presented to the charity, and thought they might serve as a specimen to show that, were there an inclination in England for encouraging historical pictures, such a first essay might prove the painting them more easily attainable than is generally imagined. But as Religion, the great promoter of this style in other countries, rejected it in England, and I was unwilling to sink into a portrait manufacturer, and still ambitious of being singular, I soon dropped all expectations of advantage from that source, and returned to the pursuit of my former dealings with the public at large."

Of Hogarth many anecdotes are related; some are

trivial and unimportant, others refer to his character and study, of which a few may be acceptable to the reader as showing how he looked among his brethren of the pencil and graver.

It was his custom to sketch out on the spot any remarkable face which struck him, and of which he wished to preserve an accurate remembrance. He was once observed in the Bedford Coffee-house drawing something with a pencil on the nail of his left thumb; he held it up to the friend who accompanied him; it was the face, and a very singular one, of a person in the same room, and the likeness was excellent.

It was in a temporary residence at Isleworth that he painted "The Rake's Progress." The crowd of visitors to his studio was immense. He often asked them if they knew for whom one or another figure in the picture was designed, and when they guessed wrong he set them right. It was generally believed that the heads were portraits of low characters well known in town. In the "Miser's Feast" he introduced Sir Isaac Shard, a person proverbially avaricious; his son, a young man of spirit, heard of this, and calling at the painter's, requested to see the picture. The young man asked the servant whether that old figure was intended for any particular person, who answered it was thought to be very like one Sir Isaac Shard, whereupon he drew his sword and slashed the canvas. Hogarth heard the bustle, and was very angry. Young Shard said: "You have taken an unwarrant-

able license; I am the injured party's son, and ready to defend my conduct at law." He went away, and was never afterwards molested.

Concerning Hogarth's vanity, Nichols relates the following anecdote. Being at dinner with Dr. Cheselden and some other company, he was informed that John Freke, surgeon at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, had asserted in Dick's Coffee-house that Greene was as eminent in composition as Handel. "That fellow Freke," cried Hogarth, "is always shooting his bolt absurdly one way or another. Handel is a giant in music, Greene only a light Florimel kind of composer." "Ay, but," said the other, "Freke declared you were as good a portrait-painter as Vandyck." "There he was in the right," quoth Hogarth, "and so I am, give me but my time and let me choose my subject."

With Dr. Hoadley, who corrected the manuscript of his "Analysis of Beauty" for the press, Hogarth was on such friendly terms that he was admitted into one of the private theatrical exhibitions which the doctor loved, and was appointed to perform along with Garrick and his entertainer a parody on that scene in "Julius Cæsar" where the ghost appeared to Brutus. Hogarth personated the spectre, but so unretentive (we are told) was his memory, that though his speech consisted only of two lines, he was unable to get them by heart, and his facetious associates wrote them on an illuminated lantern that he might read them when he came upon the stage. Such is the way in which anecdotes are

manufactured, and conclusions of absence of mind or imbecility drawn. The speech of the ghost written on the paper lantern formed part of the humour of the burlesque. Men dull in comprehending the eccentricities of genius, set down what passes their own understanding to the account of the other's stupidity.

Hogarth's thoughts were so much employed on scenes which he had just witnessed, or on works which he contemplated, that he sometimes had neither eyes nor ears for anything else; this has subjected him to the charge of utter absence of mind. "At table," says Nichols, "he would sometimes turn his chair round as if he had finished eating, and as suddenly would return it and fall to his meal again." According to this writer, soon after our artist set up his carriage he went to visit Beckford, who was then Lord Mayor; the day became stormy during the interview, and when Hogarth took his leave he went out at a wrong door, forgot that he had a carriage, could not find a hackney-coach, and came home wet to the skin, to the astonishment of his wife. When Fonthill (Beckford's residence) was burnt, the fourteen original paintings of the Harlot's and Rake's Progresses were consumed.

In his memoranda respecting the establishment of an Academy of Art in England, Hogarth agreed with Voltaire's assertion that after the establishment of the French Academy not one work of genius appeared, for all the painters became mannerists and imitators. "The institution will serve to raise and pension a few

bustling and busy men," was what Hogarth wrote, "whose whole employment will be to tell a few simple students when a leg is too long or an arm too short. More will flock to the study of art than what genius sends; the hope of profit or the thirst of distinction will induce parents to push their offspring into the lecture-room, and many will appear but few be worthy. The paintings of Italy form a sort of ornamental fringe to their gaudy religion, and Rome is the general store-shop of Europe. The arts owe much to Popery, and Popery owes much of its universality to the arts. The French have attained a sort of foppish magnificence in art; in Holland selfishness is the ruling passion, and in England vanity is united with selfishness. Portrait-painting therefore has succeeded, and ever will succeed, better in England than in any other country, and the demand will continue as new faces come into the market. Portrait-painting is one of the ministers of vanity, and vanity is a munificent patroness; historical painting seeks to revive the memory of the dead, and the dead are very indifferent paymasters. Paintings are plentiful enough in England to keep us from the study of Nature; but students who confine their studies to works of the dead, need never hope to live themselves; they will learn little more than the names of the painters; true painting can only be learnt in one school, and that is kept by Nature."

CHAPTER V

RICHARD WILSON

1713–1782

RICHARD WILSON, the first great English landscape painter, was born in the year 1713 at his father's Rectory of Penegoes, in Montgomeryshire. He loved, when a child, to trace figures of men and animals with a burnt stick upon the walls of the house, and his father seems to have encouraged him. In course of time Sir George Wynne, a relation, took him to London, where he appears to have got a living by painting portraits.

But the turning-point in his career was his journey to Italy in 1748, when he was thirty-five years old. Here he continued the study and practice of portrait-painting with fair hopes of success, when an accident opened another avenue to fame, and shut up the way to fortune. Waiting one morning for Zuccarelli, he beguiled the time by painting the view from the window, and Zuccarelli in astonishment asked if he had ever studied landscape. Wilson replied that he had not. "Then I advise you," said the other, "to try, for you are sure of a great success." The counsel of one friend was confirmed by the opinion of another. This was Vernet, a man whose generosity was equal

to his reputation. He was so struck with the peculiar beauty of one of Wilson's landscapes that he offered one of his own in exchange for it; the exchange was made, and Vernet hung his friend's picture in his exhibition room, and when his own productions happened to be praised or purchased by English travellers, the generous Frenchman used to say, "Don't talk of my landscapes alone, when your own countryman Wilson paints so beautifully."

After a residence of six years abroad he returned to England to try his fortune as a landscape painter, and the commencement was promising, the Duke of Cumberland and the Marquis of Tavistock purchasing his "Niobe" and "View of Rome"; and on the death of Hayman he was appointed librarian to the Royal Academy. The love of landscape painting, however, spread very slowly, and he soon began to find that in relinquishing portraits he had forsaken the way to wealth and fashionable distinction, and taken the road to certain want and unprofitable fame.

Wilson was conscious of his merits, and not of the most bending disposition. It may be questioned therefore, after all, whether he did not become a martyr to a principle of disdaining to humble himself to those, however superior to himself in rank or riches, who measure by inches and value by pounds. He returned from Italy impressed by his own powers, and in some contempt, not perhaps totally unmerited, of his contemporaries. His return excited some interest and much criticism in the coteries of art at that time;

and those artists, &c., who then constituted what they called *a Committee of Taste*, and led the understanding of the public in art, sat in judgment several times upon him, and came to a resolution, purporting "That the manner of Mr. Wilson was not suited to the English taste, and that if he hoped for patronage he must change it for the lighter style of Zuccarelli. They voted also, in friendliness to Mr. Wilson, that Mr. Penny (the Academician) should be deputed to communicate the resolution to Mr. W., which was done accordingly. Wilson, who was painting at the time, heard it in silence, went on with his work, but soon turned round, and very coolly, in the most contemptuous manner, gave such an answer to Mr. Penny, as sufficiently showed the thorough indifference in which he held this self-constituted Committee of Taste. . . . Upon this fatal reply may have greatly depended the ill success of his future endeavours, to which he became a martyr. The members opposed him with his patrons, which, added to his spurning rather than conciliating the esteem of Sir Joshua Reynolds and the want of better judgment in society, proved fatal to him."

At this period the Turk's Head in Gerrard Street was celebrated for two clubs or societies, the one literary, the other of artists; and Wilson would in his characteristic manner point out to a brother-artist any unknown member of the former who chanced to pass by, whispering, "There goes one of the *Sapientia*." At one of the meetings at the Turk's Head, Cosway,

who had been at Court, attended in all the gay costume of the drawing-room, with pink heels to his shoes, &c., but the room was so full he could not find a place. "What," said Frank Hayman, "can nobody make room for the little monkey?" Wilson laughed and exclaimed, "Good God, how times and circumstances are changed; sure, the world is turned topsy-turvy—formerly the monkey rode the bear, but here we have the bear upon the monkey." This set the table in a roar, in which Hayman joined heartily, and rising, shook hands with Cosway, who received him with the greatest familiarity and politeness, and instantly every chair in the room was at his service.

Of another class was the satiré of Zoffany, in his picture of the Royal Academy, in which he introduced portraits of all the Academicians, and a not very favourable one of Wilson, with a pot of porter by him. Wilson accordingly treated it in a different way, by taking a stick, and swearing he would give Zoffany a sound thrashing, and he would have kept his word if Zoffany had not prudently painted it out. When he visited Sir William Beechey, which he frequently did of an evening, he would rarely take anything more than a sandwich, without wine or ardent spirit; but if a tankard of porter with a toast in it were placed before him, it was irresistible, and he would partake of it when he had refused everything else, but not to excess. On these occasions he said very little. A very charming account of Wilson socially—even if not to be taken as too literally true—is given in

"Walnuts and Wine," where Dr. Johnson, Sterne, Wilson, and Goldsmith are supposed to be assembled at Garrick's with a party of ladies for supper.

"We were very lively at your expense indeed, gentlemen," said Mrs. Garrick, rallying them for having arrived late; "to punish you for not obeying our summons, the ladies likened you all to plants and fruits and flowers."

"Pray let us hear," said Wilson. "Doubtless I come in for a sprig of laurel."

"No, sir," said the pretty, lively lady, "you are wrong."

"For rue, perchance," said he.

"No, sir; guess again."

"Why, I am dubbed bitter enough; perhaps a crab," said he, "for that man (pointing to Garrick) has dubbed me Sour-Dick."

"Guess again," said the laughing maid. . . . "Will you give it up?"

"Yes, madam."

"Why then, sir, you are likened to olives. Now, sir, will you dare to inquire further?"

"Let me see," said Wilson, all eyes upon him. "Well then, my dear, out with it! I dare."

"Then know, sir," said she, rising and curtseying most gravely, "Mr. Wilson is rough to the taste at first, tolerable by a little longer acquaintance, and delightful at last."

Wilson's relations with the all-powerful Reynolds were unfortunate, and probably not the least serious

cause of his ill success with the public. It is a well-known story that at a meeting of the members of the Academy on a social occasion, Reynolds proposed the health of Gainsborough *as the best landscape painter;* on which Wilson added aloud, *and the best portrait painter too.* But there is a useful little passage quoted by Wright, from a work on the picturesque, which shows that there was some sort of intercourse between the two artists. "Sir Joshua Reynolds told me," says Price, the author, "that when he and Wilson the landscape painter were looking at the view from Richmond Terrace, Wilson was pointing out some particular part; and in order to direct his eye to it, 'There,' he said, 'near those houses—there where the *figures* are.' 'Though a painter,' said Sir Joshua, 'I was puzzled; I thought he meant statues, and was looking upon the tops of the houses, for I did not at first conceive that the men and women we plainly saw walking about were, by him, only thought of as figures in the landscape.'"

In Sir William Beechey he had a good friend, and at his house he frequently reposed from the cares of the world and the persecution of fortune. The first time he was invited to dine there he asked, "You have daughters, Mr. Beechey; do they draw? All young ladies draw now." "No, sir," answered his prudent entertainer, "my daughters are musical." He was pleased to hear this, and accepted the invitation. Such was the blunt honesty of his nature, that when drawings were shown to him which he disliked he disdained,

or was unable, to give a courtly answer, and made many of the students his enemies.

The salary of librarian rescued him from utter starvation; indeed so few were his wants, so simple his fare, and so moderate his appetite, that he found it, little as it was, nearly enough. He had, as he grew old, become more neglectful of his person; as fortune forsook him he left his fine house in Covent Garden for one inferior; he made sketches for half-a-crown, and expressed gratitude to Paul Sandby for purchasing a number from him at a small advance of price. His last retreat, before he left London to enjoy the estate in Wales left him by his brother, was a small room somewhere about Tottenham Court Road; an easel and a brush, a chair and a table, a hard bed with few clothes, a scanty meal and the favourite pot of porter, were all that Wilson could at that time call his own.

His process of painting was simple; his colours were few, he used but one brush, and worked standing. He prepared his palette, made a few touches, then retired to the window to refresh his eyes with natural light, and returned in a few minutes and resumed his labours. Beechey called on him one day when he was at work; he seized his visitor hastily by the arm, hurried him to the remotest corner of the room, and said, "There, look at my landscape—this is where you should view a painting if you wish to examine it with your eyes and not with your nose." He was then an old man, his sight was failing, his touch was

unsure, and he painted somewhat coarsely, but the effect was wonderful. He too, like Reynolds, had his secrets of colour, and his mystery of the true principle in painting, which he refused to explain, saying, "They are like those of Nature, and are to be sought for and found in my performances." Of his own future fame he spoke seldom, for he was a modest man, but when he did speak of it he used expressions which the world has since sanctioned. "Beechey," he said, "you will live to see great prices given for my pictures, when those of Barrett will not fetch one farthing."

CHAPTER VI

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

1723–1792

JOSHUA, the son of the Reverend Samuel Reynolds and Theophila Poker, his wife, was the tenth of eleven children, five of whom died in infancy. He was born at Plympton, in Devonshire, on Thursday, July 16, 1723, three months before the death of Kneller.

Few men of genius are allowed to be born and baptized in an ordinary way; some commotion in Nature must mark the hour of their birth, some strange interposition must determine their name—the like happened to young Reynolds. His father, a clergyman of the Established Church, gave him the scriptural name of Joshua, in the belief, says Malone, who had the legend from Bishop Percy of Dromore, that some enthusiast of the same name might be induced to give him a fortune. The family motives, as recorded by Northcote, had more of the shrewdness of calculation in them. An uncle from whom something might be expected lived in the neighbourhood, and *he* was a Joshua. Owing to the haste or carelessness of the clergyman, the church may claim some share in the marvels which accompanied his

birth; he was baptized in one name and entered in the parish register in another—the Joshua of all the rest of the world is a Joseph at Plympton.

His father was a man of respectable learning, who performed without reproach his stated duties in religion, and presided with the reputation of a scholar in the public school at Plympton, was remarkable for the innocence of his heart and the simplicity of his manners. He was what is called an absent man, and was regarded by his parishioners as a sort of Parson Adams. Of his forgetfulness it is said that in performing a journey on horseback one of his boots dropped off by the way without being missed by the owner; and of his wit—for wit also has been ascribed to him—it is related that in allusion to his wife's name, Theophila, he made the following rhyming domestic arrangement—

When I say The
Thou must make tea—
When I say Offey
Thou must make coffee.

He seems, however, to have somewhat neglected his son's education. It is true that on one occasion at least he rebuked him for wasting his time, writing on the back of a drawing of his, "Done by Joshua out of pure idleness." But a transient rebuke will not atone for habitual inattention, and Northcote, the pupil and biographer of Reynolds, reluctantly admits his master's deficiency in classical attainments. "The

mass of general knowledge by which he was distinguished," he writes, "was the result of much studious application in his riper years."

His inclination to idleness as to reading and industry in drawing began to appear early. "His first essays," says Malone, who had the information from himself, "was copying some slight drawings made by two of his sisters who had a turn for art; he afterwards eagerly copied such prints as he met with among his father's books, and when he was some eight years old he read "The Jesuit's Perspective" with so much care and profit, that he made a drawing of Plympton School, in which the principles of that art were very tolerably adhered to.

In 1741, when he was nineteen years of age, he was sent to London to learn painting under Hudson, with whom he continued for two years, and acquired with uncommon rapidity such professional knowledge as could then and there be obtained. He painted during that period various portraits, amongst which was that of an elderly servant-woman of Hudson's, in which, says Northcote, he discovered a taste so superior to the painters of the day that his master, not without displaying a strong feeling of jealousy, foretold his future eminence. It was accidentally exhibited in Hudson's gallery, and obtained general applause. This was more than the old man could endure. Without any warm or angry words a separation took place, and Reynolds returned into Devonshire, where he remained, till in May 1749 Captain

Keppel, who had been appointed Commodore in the Mediterranean Station, invited Reynolds to accompany him. The young artist willingly embarked with the full equipment of his profession, and after touching at Lisbon, Gibraltar, Algiers, and Minorca, landed at Leghorn and went directly to Rome, where he stayed for over two years.

He seems to have employed his time in that city chiefly in studying all the varieties of excellence, and in acquiring that knowledge of effect which he was so soon to display. Few original productions came from his hand while he remained in Rome. He painted a noble portrait of himself, and left it there, and he also painted a kind of parody on Raphael's "School of Athens," into which he introduced about thirty likenesses of English students, travellers, and connoisseurs, and amongst others that of Mr. Henry, of Straffan, in Ireland, the (then) proprietor of the picture. "I have heard Reynolds himself say," remarks Northcote, "that it was universally allowed that he executed subjects of this kind with much humour and spirit, yet he thought it prudent to abandon the practice, since it might corrupt his taste as a portrait-painter, whose duty it was to discover only the perfections of those whom he represented."

He returned to England in 1752, and after visiting Devonshire for a few weeks, obeyed the solicitations of Lord Edgecumbe and his own wishes and established himself as a professional man in St. Martin's Lane, London. He found such opposition as

Sir Joshua Reynolds *Hanfstaengl*

PORTRAITS OF TWO GENTLEMEN

genius is commonly doomed to meet with, and does not always overcome. The boldness of his attempts, the freedom of his conceptions, and the brilliancy of his colouring, were considered as innovations upon the established and orthodox system of portrait manufacture. The artists raised their voices first, and of these Hudson, who had just returned from Rome, was loudest. His old master looked for some minutes on a boy in a turban which he had just painted, and exclaimed, with the addition of the national oath, "Reynolds, you don't paint so well as when you left England!" Ellis, an eminent portrait-maker, who had studied under Kneller, lifted up his voice the next. "Ah! Reynolds, this will never answer. Why, you don't paint in the least like Sir Godfrey." The youthful artist defended himself with much ability, upon which the other exclaimed in astonishment at this new heresy in art, "Shakespeare in poetry, and Kneller in painting, damme!" and walked out of the room. This sharp treatment, and the constant quotation of the names of Lely and Kneller, infected the mind of Reynolds with a dislike for the works of those two popular painters, which continued to the close of his life. He thus describes the artists with whom he had to contend in the commencement of his career. "They have got a set of postures which they apply to all persons indiscriminately; the consequence is that all their pictures look like so many sign-post paintings, and if they have a history or a family piece to paint, the first thing they do is to look over their commonplace

book, containing sketches which they have stolen from various pictures; then they search their prints over and pilfer one figure from one print and another from a second, but never take the trouble of thinking for themselves."

But the contest with his fellow-artists was not of long duration. The works which had gained him celebrity were not the fortunate offspring of some happy moment, but of one who could pour out such pictures in profusion. Better ones were not slow in coming. He painted the Duke of Devonshire, and this increased his fame. He next painted his patron, Commodore Keppel, and produced a work of such truth and nobleness, that it fixed universal attention. The artist deviated from the formal style of his rivals, and deviated into excellence. The spirit of a higher species of art was visible in this performance, yet the likeness was reckoned perfect. Liotard, a Frenchman, who for a short time succeeded in attracting the more fashionable sitters to his studio, soon returned to the Continent, leaving an open field and the honour of victory to Reynolds—the first time that a British painter had triumphed in such a contest. He now removed from St. Martin's Lane, and took a handsome house on the north side of Great Newport Street. His portrait of Keppel, and his picture of the two Grevilles, brother and sister, as Cupid and Psyche, and his success in the contest for distinction with Liotard, brought business in abundance, and his apartments were filled with ladies of quality and with men

of rank, all alike desirous of having their persons preserved to posterity by one who touched no subject without adorning it. "The desire to perpetuate the form of self-complacency," says Northcote, "crowded the sitting-room of Reynolds with women who wished to be transmitted as angels, and with men who wished to appear as heroes and philosophers. The force and felicity of his portraits not only drew around him the opulence and beauty of the nation, but happily gained him the merited honour of perpetuating the features of all the eminent and distinguished men of learning then living."

It was about this time (1754) that Reynolds made the acquaintance of Samuel Johnson. How this happened is related by Boswell. The artist was visiting in Devonshire, and in an interval of conversation or study opened the "Life of Savage." While he was standing with his arm against the chimney-piece he began to read, and it seized his attention so strongly that, not being able to lay down the book till he had finished it, when he attempted to move he found his arm totally benumbed. He was solicitous to know an author one of whose books had thus enchanted him, and, by accident or design, he met him at the Miss Cotterals in Newport Street. It was Reynolds' good fortune also to make a remark which Johnson perceived could only have arisen in the mind of a man who thought for himself. The ladies were regretting the death of a friend to whom they owed great obligations. "You have however the comfort,"

said Reynolds, "of being relieved of the burden of gratitude." They were shocked at this selfish suggestion; but Johnson maintained that it was true to human nature, and on going away accompanied Reynolds home. Thus commenced a friendship which was continued to old age without much interruption; and of the fruit which he derived from the intercourse he thus speaks in one of his Discourses on Art. 'Whatever merit these Discourses may have," he says, 'must be imputed in a great measure to the education which I may be said to have had under Dr. Johnson. I do not mean to say, though it certainly would be to the credit of these Discourses if I could say it with truth, that he contributed even a single sentiment to them; but he qualified my mind to think justly. . . . The observations which he made on poetry, on life, and on everything about us, I applied to our art—with what success others must judge."

The year 1758 was perhaps the most lucrative of his professional career. The account of the economy of his studies, and the distribution of his time at this period is curious and instructive. It was his practice to keep all the prints engraved from his portraits, together with his sketches, in a large portfolio; these he submitted to his sitters; and whatever position they selected, he immediately proceeded to copy it on his canvas, and paint the likeness to correspond. He received six sitters daily, who appeared in their turns; and he kept regular lists of those who sat, and of those who were waiting until a finished portrait should

open a vacancy for their admission. He painted them as they stood on his list, and often sent the work home before the colours were dry.

In 1761 he quitted Newport Street, purchased a fine house on the west side of Leicester Square, furnished it with much taste, added a splendid gallery for the exhibition of his works, and an elegant dining-room; and finally taxed his invention and his purse in the production of a carriage, with the wheels carved and gilt, and bearing on its panels the four seasons of the year. His sister complained that it was too showy. "What!" said the painter, "would you have one like an apothecary's carriage?" His study (studio) was octagonal, some twenty feet long, sixteen broad, and about fifteen high. The window was small and square, and the sill nine feet from the floor. His sitter's chair moved on castors, and stood above the floor a foot and a half; he held his palettes by a handle, and the sticks of his brushes were eighteen inches long. He wrought standing, with great celerity. He rose early, breakfasted at nine, entered his studio at ten, examined designs or touched unfinished portraits till eleven brought a sitter; painted till four; then dressed, and gave the evening to company.

His table was now elegantly furnished, and round it men of genius were often found. He was a lover of poetry and poets; they sometimes read their productions at his house, and were rewarded by his approbation and occasionally by their portraits. Johnson was a frequent and welcome guest. Percy was there

too, with his ancient ballads, and Goldsmith with his latent genius, infantine vivacity, and plum-coloured coat. Burke and his brothers were constant guests, and Garrick was seldom absent, for he loved to be where greater men were. Reynolds seems to have loved the company of literary men more than that of artists. He had little to learn in his profession, and he naturally sought the society of those who had knowledge to impart. They have rewarded him with their approbation; he who has been praised by Burke, and loved by Burke, has little chance of being forgotten.

In the year 1762 Reynolds, for the benefit of his health, paid a visit to Devonshire. He was welcomed with something of a silent approbation, for the populace of England knew little, and cared less, about painting. The applause too of a man's native place is generally the last which he receives. Homage was, however, paid to him by one then young and nameless, who afterwards rose high. "Mr. Reynolds," writes Northcote, "was pointed out to me at a public meeting, where a great crowd was assembled. I got as near him as I could from the pressure of the people, to touch the skirt of his coat, which I did with great satisfaction to my mind." Reynolds returned to London restored to health, and resumed his interrupted labours. His commissions were now numerous and important, and he informed Johnson that his professional income amounted to six thousand pounds a year—a large sum in those days, when portraits brought but twenty-five guineas each.

The Royal Academy was planned and proposed in 1768 by Chambers, West, Cotes, and Moser; the caution or timidity of Reynolds kept him for some time from assisting. A list of thirty members was made out, and West called on Reynolds, and in a conference lasting two hours succeeded in persuading him to join them. He thereupon ordered his coach, and, accompanied by West, entered the room where his brother-artists were assembled. They rose up to a man, and saluted him "President." Though affected by the compliment, he declined the honour until he had talked with Johnson and Burke. After consulting with them he consented, but at the same time he expressed his belief that their scheme was a mere delusion. The King, who at first looked coldly upon the project, as it seemed set up in opposition to the elder society—the Incorporated Society of Artists—on further consideration offered voluntarily to supply all deficiencies annually from his private purse, and bestowed the honour of knighthood on the President. Johnson was so elated at the title conferred on his friend that he drank wine in its celebration, though he had abstained from it for several years.

During the years he was President, Reynolds delivered fifteen Discourses for the instruction of students in the principles and practice of their art. A nobleman who was present at the delivery of the first of the series said, "Sir Joshua, you read your discourse in a tone so low that I scarce heard a word you said."

"That was to my advantage," replied the President, with a smile.

About the close of the summer of 1773 he visited his native place, and was elected Mayor of Plympton, a distinction so much to his liking that he assured the King, whom he accidentally encountered on his return in one of the walks at Hampton Court, that it gave him more pleasure than any other he had ever received, "excepting," he added, recollecting himself —"excepting that which your Majesty so graciously conferred on me, the honour of knighthood."

The arts now met with a repulse from the Church, which is often mentioned with sorrow by the painters. It happened that Reynolds and West were dining with the Dean of St. Paul's, and their conversation turned upon religious paintings, and upon the naked appearance of the English churches in the absence of such ornaments. West generously offered a painting of "Moses and the Laws" for St. Paul's Cathedral, and Reynolds tendered a "Nativity." As this offer was in a manner fulfilling the original design of Sir Christopher Wren, the Dean imagined it would be received with rapture by all concerned. The King consented immediately, but Terrick, Bishop of London, objected at once. "No," said he, "whilst I live and have power no popish paintings shall enter the door of the metropolitan church." The project was dropped and never again revived.

Reynolds was fond of trying to discover the secrets of the old painters. He even dissected some of their

ROBINETTA

(After the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds: No. 892 in the National Gallery, London)

works without remorse or scruple, to ascertain their method of laying on colour and finishing. But this was a concealed pursuit; he disclosed his discoveries to none. He lectured on Michael Angelo and discoursed on Raphael; but he studied and dreamed of Titian, whom he conceived to be the great master-spirit in portraiture. "To possess," said the artist, "a really fine picture by that great master, I would sell all my gallery; I would willingly ruin myself." The old paintings of the Venetian School which Reynolds destroyed by his experiments were numerous, and it may be questioned whether his discoveries were a compensation for their loss.

Reynolds was skilful in compliments. When he painted the portrait of Mrs. Siddons as the "Tragic Muse," he wrought his name on the border of her robe, saying, "I cannot lose this opportunity of sending my name to posterity on the hem of your garment."

He once remarked that he could teach any boy whom chance might throw in his way to paint a likeness. "To paint like Velasquez is another thing. He did at once, and with ease, what we cannot accomplish with time and labour." Reynolds was an ardent lover of his profession, and when Tucker, Dean of Gloucester, asserted that a pin-maker was a more valuable member of society than a Raphael, said with some asperity, "That is an observation of a very narrow mind, a mind that is confined to the mere object of commerce. . . . Commerce is the means, not the end of happiness. The end is a rational en-

joyment by means of arts and sciences. It is therefore the highest degree of folly to set the means in a higher rank of esteem than the end. It is as much as to say that the brick-maker is superior to the architect."

As has been pointed out, the President was frugal in his communications respecting the sources from which he drew his own practice, but he forgot his caution in a note on the masters of the Venetian School. "When I was at Venice," he wrote, "the method I took to avail myself of their principles was this: When I observed an extraordinary effect of light and shade in any picture, I took a leaf out of my pocket-book, and darkened every part of it in the same gradation of light and shade as the picture, leaving the white paper untouched to represent the light, and this without any attention to the subject or the drawing of the figures. A few trials of this kind will be sufficient to give the method of their conduct in the management of their lights. After a few experiments I found the paper blotted nearly alike: their general practice appeared to be, to allow not above a quarter of the picture for the light, including in this portion both the principal and secondary lights; another quarter to be kept as dark as possible; and the remaining half kept in mezzotint or half shadow."

Reynolds was commonly humane and tolerant; he could indeed afford, both in fame and in purse, to commend and aid the timid and the needy. When Gainsborough asked sixty guineas for his "Girl and

Pigs," Sir Joshua gave him a hundred; and when another English artist of celebrity, on his arrival from Rome, asked him where he should set up a studio, he informed him that the next house to his own was vacant, and at his service.

When Allan Ramsay, the King's painter, died in 1784, he was succeeded in his office by Reynolds. The emolument was little, and the honour, owing to the post having been filled by several inferior artists, unimportant. In fact, Reynolds accepted it only in compliance with the wishes of the sovereign.

Reynolds once observed that it was impossible for two painters in the same line of art to live in friendship. This was probably uttered in a moment of peevishness. It is nevertheless nearer the truth than the disciples of art are willing to admit. What is the secret history of the Royal Academy but a record of battles and bickerings, of petty disputes and trifling animosities? Hogarth lived before it was founded, an object of mingled envy and terror. Gainsborough disliked Reynolds, Reynolds had no goodwill to Gainsborough; Wilson also shared in this unamiable feeling, and Barry was unwilling to forgive any one who painted better than himself. The animosities of the lesser spirits are unworthy of notice.

Until Sir Joshua reached his sixty-sixth year, he was happy in his fame and fortune. But the hour of sorrow was at hand. One day in the month of July 1789, while finishing the portrait of the Marchioness of Hertford, he felt a sudden decay of sight in his

left eye. He laid down his pencil, sat awhile in mute consideration, and never lifted it more. His sight gradually darkened, and within two weeks of the first attack his left eye was totally blind. His peace of mind was also invaded by other disturbers than blindness. A fierce feud broke out between Sir Joshua and the Royal Academy over the appointment of the Professor of Perspective. Reynolds' candidate, an Italian, was defeated, and the President quitted the chair deeply offended. He afterwards indignantly resigned the Presidency, bidding a final farewell to the Academy, but he was prevailed upon to resume his seat, and he did so only to resign again on account of ill-health and blindness. The last time that Reynolds made his appearance in the Academy was in the year 1790. He addressed a speech to the students on the delivery of the medals, and concluded by expatiating upon the genius of his favourite master in such words as a credulous Catholic may use in praise of a benevolent saint. "I feel," said he, "a self-congratulation in knowing myself capable of such sensations as he intended to excite. I reflect, not without vanity, that these Discourses bear testimony of my admiration of that truly divine man; and I should desire that the last words which I should pronounce in this Academy, and from this place, might be the name of Michael Angelo."

In 1792 he died in the sixty-ninth year of his age, and was buried in one of the crypts of St. Paul's Cathedral.

CHAPTER VII

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH

1727–1788

THOMAS, the youngest son of a clothier at Sudbury, in Suffolk, was born in the year 1727, and before he was twelve years old was the hero of two stories that will always be remembered of him. He had asked for a holiday, being anxious to go sketching in the woods, and when this was refused, he forged his father's order to the schoolmaster to "Give Tom a holiday." On another occasion he was concealed among some bushes in his father's garden, making a sketch of an old fantastic tree, when he observed a man looking most wistfully over the wall at some pears which were hanging ripe and tempting. The slanting light of the sun happened to throw the eager face into a highly picturesque mixture of light and shade, and Tom immediately sketched his likeness, much to the poor man's consternation afterwards, and much to the amusement of his father, when he taxed the peasant with the intention of plundering his garden, and showed him how he looked.

At fourteen he went to London, and studied under Gravelot and Hayman for about three years. Returning to Sudbury, it happened in one of his pictorial

excursions among the woods that he sat down to make a sketch of some fine trees, with sheep reposing below, and wood-doves roosting above, when a young woman entered unexpectedly upon the scene, and was at once admitted into the landscape and the feelings of the artist. The name of this young lady was Margaret Burr, and her age fifteen. She was of Scottish extraction, and to the charms of good looks and good sense she added a clear annuity of £200. These are matters which no writer of romance would overlook, and were accordingly felt by a young, an ardent, and susceptible man; nor must it be omitted that country rumour conferred other attractions—she was said to be the natural daughter of one of our exiled princes; nor was she, when a wife and a mother, desirous of having this circumstance forgotten. On an occasion of household festivity, when her husband was high in fame, she vindicated some little ostentation in dress by whispering to her niece, "I have some right to this—for you know, my love, I am a prince's daughter." Prince's daughter or not, she was wooed and won by Gainsborough, and made him a kind, a prudent, and a submissive wife [?]. The young pair left Sudbury, leased a small house at a rent of £6 a year in Ipswich, and making themselves happy in mutual love, conceived they were settled for life.

In Ipswich it happened that Gainsborough became acquainted with the Governor of Landguard Fort, Philip Thicknesse, a gentleman who befriended him at

first, and maligned him afterwards. While the artist continued humble and unknown, the patron was kind; but as he began to assert his own independence, the esteem of the other subsided, and the vain friend became the avowed enemy. Had this been all, our regret might have been less; but as soon as the artist died, Thicknesse, under pretence of writing a sketch of his life, produced an unworthy pamphlet which misrepresented him as a man, while it praised him as a painter.

The first meeting of the artist and the governor was in character. The latter, while taking a walk in a friend's garden, saw a melancholy face looking over the wall. As the stranger remained long in the same position, he advanced to accost him, when he perceived it to be a piece of wood shaped and painted like a man, and stationed as a sentinel in the adjoining garden of Gainsborough. This species of joke corresponded with the taste of the governor—he waited on the artist, and upbraided him with having imposed a shadow upon him for a substance. The compliment was not ill received, and he was shown into the painting room, where he found many portraits which he thought but indifferently executed, and more landscapes, which he at once pronounced to be works of spirit and fancy. He invited him to dinner, he played him a tune on a violin, he gave him a commission to paint Landguard Fort, at the price of thirty guineas; and to sum up all, he lent him a fiddle, in which he ere long made such pro-

ficiency that the governor, though a skilful musician himself, declared that he would as soon have tried to fiddle against him as to paint against him. An engraving of the picture of Landguard Fort spread abroad the name of Gainsborough; the vanity of Thicknesse and the desire which the artist had of distinction were gratified, and they appear to have lived in great amity through the united influence of painting and fiddling.

In 1758, being now thirty years old, he fell in with the suggestion of Thicknesse that he should accompany him to Bath. It formed part of the plan of the governor, who conceived himself to be very popular in Bath, that his portrait, painted on purpose, "should serve (as he said) as a decoy duck for customers." The artist himself, however, seems to have given less enthusiasm to this project than his friend, and the portrait was never finished. The patron remonstrated, the pride of the painter was hurt, and he forthwith resolved to free himself from the incumbrance of a sort of patronising nightmare who, under pretence of caressing, seemed disposed to suffocate him.

The dissolution of their friendship was the work of years; but meanwhile Gainsborough gave all his time to portrait, to landscape, and to music. His price for a head rose from five guineas to eight, and as his fame increased, he had forty guineas for a half and a hundred for a whole length. Riches now flowed in, for his hand was ready and diligent; his

Thomas Gainsborough THE WATERING PLACE *Hanfstaengl*

wife was relieved from her fears in the matter of money, and he was enabled to indulge himself after his own fashion. Books he admired little; in one of his letters he says that he was well read in the volume of Nature, and that was learning sufficient for him. The intercourse of literary men he avoided as carefully as Reynolds courted it; but he was fond of company, and passionately so of music.

"Gainsborough's profession," says his friend Jackson, "was painting, and music was his amusement; yet there were times when music seemed to be his employment and painting his diversion. He happened on a time to see a theorbo in a picture of Vandyke's, and concluded, because perhaps it was finely painted, that the theorbo must be a fine instrument. He recollected to have heard of a German professor, and ascending to his attic found him dining on roasted apples, and smoking his pipe with his theorbo beside him. 'I am come to buy your lute—name your price and here's your money.' 'I cannot sell my lute.' 'No, not for a guinea or two—but you must sell it, I tell you.' 'My lute is worth much money—it is worth ten guineas.' 'Ay, that it is—see, here's the money.' So saying, he took up the instrument, laid down the price, went half-way down the stair, and returned. 'I have done but half my errand; what is your lute worth if I have not your book?' 'What book, Master Gainsborough?' 'Why, the book of airs you have composed for the lute.' 'Ah, sir, I can never part with my book.' 'Poh! you can make

another at any time—this is the book I mean—there's ten guineas for it—so once more good-day.' He went down a few steps and returned again. 'What use is your book to me if I don't understand it? and your lute, you may take it again if you won't teach me to play on it. Come home with me, and give me the first lesson.' 'I will come to-morrow.' 'You must come now.' 'I must dress myself.' 'For what? You are the best figure I have seen to-day.' 'I must shave, sir.' 'I honour your beard!' 'I must, however, put on my wig.' 'Damn your wig! Your cap and beard become you! Do you think if Vandyke was to paint you, he'd let you be shaved?' In this manner he frittered away his musical talents, and though possessed of ear, taste, and genius, he never had application enough to learn his notes. He seemed to take the first step, the second was of course out of his reach, and the summit became unattainable."

He was so passionately attached to music that he filled his house with all manner of instruments, and allowed his table to be infested with all sorts of professors, save bagpipers. He loved Giardini and his violin—he admired Abel and his viol-di-gamba—he patronised Fischer and his hautboy—and was in raptures with a strolling harper who descended from the Welsh mountains into Bath. When he dined, he talked of music; when he painted, he discoursed with his visitors and sitters on its merits; and when he had leisure he practised by fits and starts on his numerous instruments, and notwithstanding Jack-

son's opinion, his performance was worthy of praise.

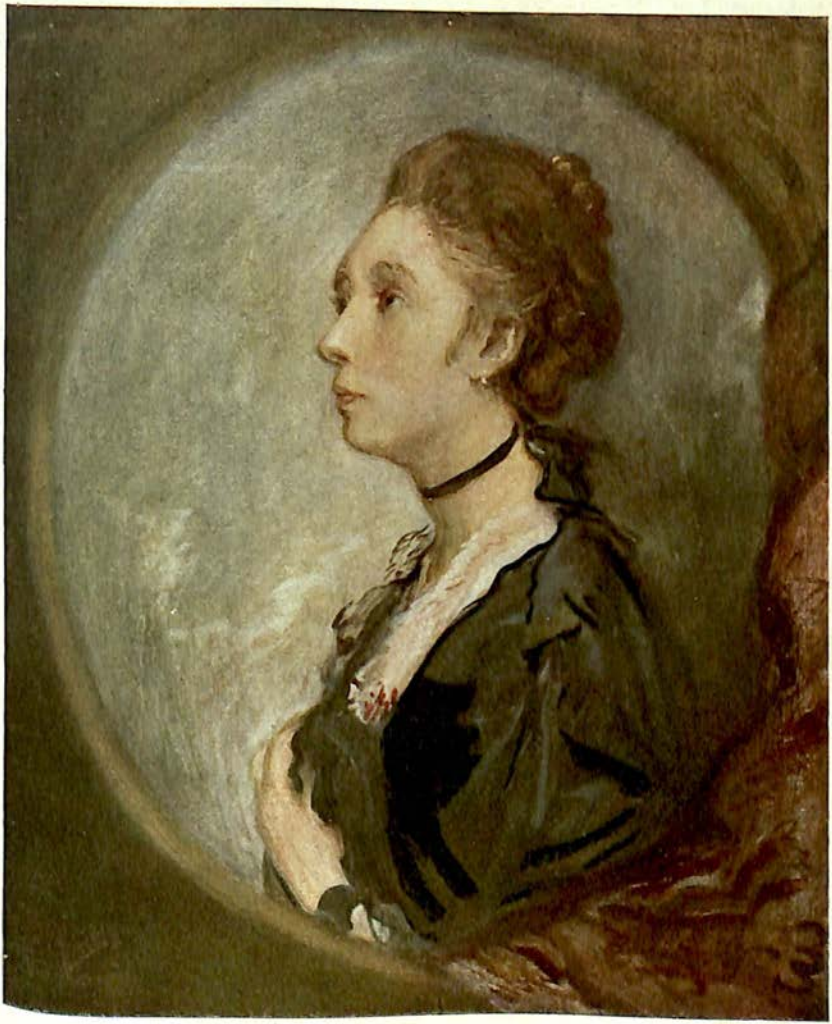
One of his acquaintances in Bath was Wiltshere, the public carrier, a kind and worthy man, who loved Gainsborough, and admired his works. In one of his landscapes he wished to introduce a horse, and as the carrier had a very handsome one, he requested the loan of it for a day or two, and named his purpose; his generous neighbour bridled and saddled it, and sent it as a present. The painter was not a man to be outdone in acts of generosity; he painted the waggon and horses of his friend, put his whole family and himself into it, and sent it well framed to Wiltshere with his kind respects.

From 1761, when Gainsborough began to exhibit his paintings at the Academy, till his removal from Bath in 1774, Wiltshere was annually employed to carry his pictures to and from London. He took great care of them, and constantly refused to accept money, saying, "No, no, I admire painting too much," and plunged his hands in his pockets to secure them against the temptation of the offered payment. Perceiving, however, that this was not acceptable to the proud artist, the honest carrier hit upon a scheme which pleased both. "When you think," said he, "that I have *carried* to the value of a little painting, I beg you will let me have one, sir, and I shall be more than paid." In this coin the painter paid Wiltshere, and overpaid him.

Gainsborough, as we have pointed out, was an en-

thusiastic admirer of music; and though certainly no musician, yet his love for sweet sounds was such that he tried his native skill upon almost every instrument. He was too capricious to study any one methodically, though having a nice ear, he could perform an air on the fiddle, the guitar, the harpsichord, or the flute. He also took lessons upon either the hautboy or clarionet, but made nothing of it. According to Angelo, Bach, who had a true German share of dry humour, used to sit and endure his miserable attempts, and laughing in his sleeve exclaim, "Bravo!" whilst Gainsborough, not at all abashed at his irony, would proceed, labouring hard at any particular key, be it major or be it minor, and drolly exclaim, "Now for Purcell's chaunt; now a specimen of old Bird." "Dat is debilish fine," cried Bach. "Now for a touch of Kent, and old Henry Lawes," added Gainsborough; when Bach, his patience worn out, would cry, "Now dat is too pad; dere is no *law*, by goles! why de gompany is to listen to your murder of all dese ancient gombosers;" when, getting up from his seat, he would run his finger rattling along all the keys, and flourish voluntaries as though he was inspired.

Another day Bach called on Gainsborough in Pall Mall, and found him in his studio fagging hard at the bassoon. The painter's cheeks were puffed, and his face was round and red as the harvest moon. Bach stood astounded. "Pote it away, man, pote it away; do you want to burst yourself, like the frog in the fable? De defil! it is only fit for the lungs of a country



PORTRAIT OF THE PAINTER'S DAUGHTER

(After the painting by Thomas Gainsborough : No. 1482 in the National Gallery, London)

blackschmidt." "Nay, now!" exclaimed Gainsborough, "it is the richest bass in the world. Now do listen again." "Listen," added Bach; "mine friendt, I did listen at your door in the passage, and py all the powers above, as I hobe to be saved, it is just for all the vorld as the veritable praying of a jackass." "Damn it!" exclaimed Gainsborough; "why, you have no ear, man, no more than an adder!"

Gainsborough had in his experiments exhausted all the legitimate methods and all the tricks of painting in his oil pictures. He had also established a reputation for a style of freak drawing. Instead of using crayons, brushes, or chalks, he adopted for his painting tools his fingers and bits of sponge. His fingers, however, not proving sufficiently eligible, one evening whilst his family and friends were taking coffee, and he was drawing in this desultory way, he seized the sugar-tongs and found them so obviously designed by the genii of art for the express purpose, that sugar-tongs at Bath, where he was then residing, were soon raised two hundred per cent. He had all the kitchen saucers in requisition; these were filled with warm and cold tints, and dipping the sponges into them, he mopped away on cartridge paper, thus preparing the masses or general contours and effects; and drying them by the fire (for he was as impatient as a spoilt child waiting for a new toy), he touched them into character with black, red, and white chalks. Some of these "moppings and grubbings and hatchings," on which he spent unusual pains, were such emana-

tions of genius and picturesque feeling, as no other artist perhaps ever conceived, and certainly such as no one ever has surpassed.

Quin, who on retiring to Bath spent much of his time with Gainsborough, used to say in his brusque manner: "Sometimes, Tom Gainsborough, the same picture, from your rigmarole style, appears to my optics the veriest daub—and then, the devil's in you, I think you a Vandyck."

Gainsborough had often told Quin that nothing could equal the devilism of portrait-painting, and to Angelo he said that he was sure the perplexities of rendering something like a human resemblance, from human blocks, was a trial of patience, that would have tempted holy St. Anthony to cut his own throat with his palette knife.

When Gainsborough was asked how he had obtained the marvellous expression of inward peace on the face of the "Parish Clerk," he said he painted it in time and tune with the sweet singing of a voice next door, the movements of the brush forming the beautiful face, and that it was the music that looked out from the eyes and smiled on the mouth. This magnificent picture was one of a number given by Gainsborough to Wiltshere the carrier.

Gainsborough's pictures can only be properly appreciated when viewed at the right distance. As Sir Joshua Reynolds remarked in one of his famous Discourses, all those odd scratches and marks which on close examination are so observable in Gainsborough's

pictures, and which even to experienced painters appear rather the effect of accident than design, this chaos, this uncouth and shapeless appearance by a kind of magic at a certain distance assumes form, and all the parts seem to drop into their proper places; so that we can hardly refuse acknowledging the full effect of diligence, under the appearance of chance and hasty negligence.

The success of Gainsborough's portraits depends, according to Sir Joshua, on his attention to the general effect rather than the detail. His portraits, he says, "were often little more in regard to finishing or determining the form of the features than what generally attends a dead colour; but as he was always attentive to the general effect or whole together, I have often imagined that this unfinished manner contributed even to that striking resemblance for which his portraits were so remarkable." In fact the success of the likeness was obtained by leaving as much as possible to the spectator's imagination.

In 1774 Gainsborough with his wife and family moved to London. It was an opportune moment. The successes of Clive in India and Wolfe in Canada had increased the wealth of London, and the demand for portraits by the best artists was almost unlimited. The fame of the painter had reached London long ere he himself departed from Bath, as for many years he had been a constant exhibitor at the Society of Artists, which was the forerunner of the Royal Academy. In 1772 he had exhibited no less than fifteen pictures

at the Academy. Accordingly after his arrival at Schomberg House in Pall Mall, where he took rooms and a studio at a rent of £300 a year, he was not long in attracting the world of fashion to his easel, and in dividing with Romney and Reynolds the patronage of the rank and beauty of the metropolis.

In 1784 he quarrelled with the Academy. The trouble arose over the hanging of his portrait group of the Princess Royal and the Princesses Augusta and Elizabeth. When this work was sent in to the exhibition, Gainsborough requested that it might be hung in a certain way not exactly in accordance with the rules of the Academy regulating the position of full-length portraits. The Hanging Committee refused to make an exception to the rule in favour of Gainsborough, to the vast indignation of the latter. He promptly wrote that he could not possibly consent to have it placed higher than eight feet and a half, because the likeness and work of the picture would not be seen any higher. "Therefore at a word," he continued, "he will not trouble the gentlemen against their inclination, but will beg the rest of his pictures back again. This he swears by God." The pictures were returned to the artist, and he never again exhibited at the Academy.

Even before this incident he did not concern himself much with the affairs or proceedings of the Academy, and he habitually neglected to attend their meetings. According to Northcote, "he never came near it! He was too proud and satirical; he was not

Mansell

Thomas Gainsborough

THE BLUE BOY

a person to be managed by such a set. I believe the only time he attended was to try to get Garvey admitted—an unworthy errand, certainly."

Like Reynolds, he painted standing, in preference to sitting, and the brushes which he used had shafts sometimes two yards long. He stood as far from his sitter as he did from his picture, that the hues might be the same. When his sitters left him, it was his custom to close the shutter, in which was a small circular aperture, the only access for the light, that he might sacrifice all the detail in his works which he deemed unnecessary or injurious to the general effect.

The great defect in Gainsborough's character was a want of that evenness of temper which Reynolds so abundantly possessed. It was a maxim with Sir Joshua never to regard or be affected by small things. It was otherwise with Gainsborough. A certain noble lord came for his portrait, and that all might be worthy of his station he donned a new suit of clothes, richly laced, with a well-powdered wig. Down he sat, and put on a practised look of such importance and prettiness, that the artist, who was no flatterer either with tongue or pencil, muttered, "This will never do." He was further exasperated by the request from his sitter, "Now, sir, I beg you will not overlook the dimple on my chin!" This was the last straw. "Confound the dimple on your chin," exclaimed Gainsborough, laying down his brushes; "I shall neither paint the one nor the other."

Garrick too and Foote also came for their like-

nesses. He tried again and again without success, and dismissed them in despair. "Rot them for a couple of rogues," he cried, "they have everybody's faces but their own!"

The jealousy between Gainsborough and Reynolds may be illustrated by the following story told by Northcote. "Sir Joshua Reynolds," said Northcote, "had a high opinion of Gainsborough, and very justly, but Gainsborough and he could not stable their horses together, for there was jealousy between them. Gainsborough, I remember, solicited Sir Joshua to sit to him for his portrait, and he no doubt expected to be requested to sit to Sir Joshua in return. But I heard Sir Joshua say, 'I suppose he expects me to ask him to sit to me; I shall do no such thing!' Sir Joshua had a paralytic stroke, which interrupted the painting of his portrait; when he recovered he sent word to Gainsborough that he was ready to resume his sittings, but the latter declined to take it up again, having found out, I suppose, that his contrivance did not take."

But Gainsborough was not always wanting in respect to the President of the Academy. The former once remarked that Sir Joshua's pictures, in their most decayed state, were better than those of any other artist when in their best.

Northcote tell us of a smart repartee made by Gainsborough when under cross-examination in the witness-box. The case had reference to the originality of a picture, and during the course of the trial

an eminent counsel put this question to the artist, "I observe," said he, "you lay great stress on the phrase, the *painter's eye;* what do you mean by that?" "The painter's eye," replied Gainsborough, "is to him what the lawyer's tongue is to you."

Though Gainsborough was not partial to the society of literary men, he seems to have been acquainted with Johnson and with Burke, and he lived on terms of great affection with Richard Brinsley Sheridan. He was also a welcome visitor at the table of Sir George Beaumont. Sir George used to relate a curious anecdote about Gainsborough, which marks the unequal spirits of the man, and shows that he was the slave of wayward impulses which he could neither repress nor command. Sir George Beaumont, Sheridan, and Gainsborough had dined together, and the artist was more than usually pleasant and witty. The meeting was so much to their mutual satisfaction that they agreed to have another day's happiness, and an early day was named. They met, but Gainsborough sat silent with a look of fixed melancholy, which no wit could dissipate. At length he took Sheridan by the hand, led him out of the room, and said, "Now don't laugh, but listen. I shall die soon—I know it, I feel it; I have less time to live than my looks infer, but for this I care not. What oppresses my mind is this: I have many acquaintances and few friends, and as I wish to have one worthy man to accompany me to the grave, I am desirous of bespeaking you; will you come, ay or no?" Sheridan could scarcely repress a smile

as he made the required promise; the looks of Gainsborough cleared up like the sunshine of one of his own landscapes, and throughout the rest of the evening his wit overflowed.

A year or so later Gainsborough went to hear the impeachment of Warren Hastings, and sitting with his back to an open window, suddenly felt something inconceivably cold touch his neck above the shirt-collar. It was accompanied with stiffness and pain. On returning home he mentioned what he felt to his wife and his niece, and on looking they saw a mark, about the size of a shilling, which was harder to the touch than the surrounding skin, and which he said still felt cold. The most eminent surgeons were consulted, John Hunter himself included, and all declared there was no danger, but Gainsborough had a presentiment that his end was near. "If this be cancer," he said, "I am a dead man." The authorities differ whether the disease was or was not cancer, but towards the close of July 1788 Gainsborough rapidly grew worse.

He wrote to Sir Joshua, desiring to see him once more before he died. Peace was made between the two great painters, and with these last words, "We are all going to Heaven, and Vandyck is of the company," Gainsborough expired in the sixty-first year of his age. "If any little jealousies had subsisted between us," says Reynolds, "they were forgotten in those moments of sincerity."

CHAPTER VIII

GEORGE ROMNEY

1734–1802

"THE fortunate incident," writes Hayley, the poet, in his Life of Romney, "which led him to a cultivation of the particular art that he was destined to profess and to adorn was simply this. In his youth he observed a great singularity of countenance in a stranger at church; his parents, to whom he spoke of it, desired him to describe the person. He seized a pencil, and delineated the features from memory with such a strength of resemblance as amazed and delighted his affectionate parents. The applause that he received from this accidental performance excited him to draw with more serious application."

Romney's father was a carpenter and cabinetmaker, who at the time of George's birth, in 1834, was settled at Beckside, near Dalton, in Lancashire. George was taught his father's trade, but having not only covered many deals and boards in the shop with sketches of his fellow-workmen, but also accomplished a very creditable portrait of a certain Mrs. Gardiner, was indentured to a somewhat eccentric artist, "Count" Steele, who happened to be at Kendal at this time. Steele sought to amend his slender fortunes by marriage, and

his French airs and finery aided him in securing the affections of a young lady of some fortune, with whom he resolved to elope to Gretna Green. She was vigilantly guarded; nevertheless Steele, through the active agency of Romney, carried her triumphantly over the border, leaving his pupil to superintend the studio during the honeymoon. The extreme sensibility of his temperament brought a fever upon him, and made him fall in love with a young woman who attended him during his sickness, and at the early age of twenty-two he precipitately married her, vindicating himself to his mournful parents in these terms: "If you consider everything deliberately," he wrote, "you will find it to be the best affair that ever happened to me; because if I have fortune, I shall make a better painter than I should otherwise have done, as it will be a spur to my application; and my thoughts being now still and not obstructed by youthful follies, I can practise with more diligence and success than ever."

Whether or not it be true that, as Hayley has it, he quickly perceived that he was mistaken, and that the marriage was an obstacle to his studies, that he was ruined as an artist, and that "the terror of precluding himself from those distant honours which he panted for in his profession by appearing in the world as a young married man agitated the ambitious artist to distraction," it is certain that he left his wife at Kendal when he accompanied Steele to York, and that until he retired to die there, he only twice visited her. In the whole of his artistic career, Mrs. Romney has no part.

The first of his efforts in oil, after terminating his apprenticeship to Steele, was a hand holding a letter, for the post-office window at Kendal. Portraits, however, were the works which brought him bread. His earliest were half-lengths of Walter Strickland of Sizergh, and his wife's friends, from whom he received many attentions. It was at their residence he saw portraits by Lely and Rigaud, "the only pictures by other masters," says his son, "which he had any opportunity of studying, almost of seeing, before he went to London." All his sitters, however, had not the generous feelings of the Stricklands and other friends. Dr. Bateman, the master of Sedbergh School, sat for his portrait at the moderate price of two guineas; the picture remained on hand, and a request for payment called forth the following singular epistle: "I must take the liberty of expostulating a little with you about your mean and tergiversating behaviour with regard to your promise of drawing my picture over again at your return with an addition to the price. Did you agree to that or did you not? You know you did; and yet you now fly from your word, as you are going, as you think, out of my reach; for you shall certainly have a writ upon you for non-performance of contract. I shall not only do this, but I shall represent you in your proper colours (to borrow a term of your art) both here and to your friends at London, unless you perform your agreement. You will also see yourself and your behaviour in one of the public papers, as I am persuaded it is one of the most

flagrant and scandalous breaches of faith I ever met with, and therefore merits a public exposition, and deserves to be exhibited as an object of public detestation. If you had come over only to make this picture tolerable, you would, by my recommendation, have got two or three more. *Cave litem, perfide pictor.*"

It was in 1762 that Romney came to London, and set up his easel in Dove Court, near the Mansion House, but after his success in being awarded a special premium of twenty-five guineas by the Society of Arts he moved to Charing Cross. Here he raised the price of his portraits to five guineas, and with such success that he soon found his purse heavy enough to carry him to Paris. The inquiries of many anxious sitters, he said, compelled him to take that step: "Have you ever been in France, Mr. Romney?" asked one; and "Have you ever studied in Rome?" inquired another; for in those days, even more than now, it was the fashion to deem the skill of no untravelled artist equal to the task of painting an ordinary English head in oils.

As Romney's fame began to rise in the world his ambition also expanded, and he desired better-spread tables and more luxurious accommodation. Perhaps a wish to measure himself with Reynolds caused him to fix his residence in Great Newport Street, within a few doors of the President. Here he had a fine studio and a well-replenished house; the success of his pencil became visible through all his house, and London rang from side to side of the prodigy who, in

THE PARSON'S DAUGHTER

(After the painting by G. Romney: No. 1068 in the National Gallery, London)

historical works, promised to equal the great masters of Italy, while in portrait he seemed to be in a fair way of rivalling Sir Joshua himself. One fortunate work contributed largely to this blaze of success; a picture of Sir George Warren and his Lady, with a little girl caressing a bullfinch, was so full of nature and tenderness, that all who saw it went away admiring, and spread the praise of the artist far and near.

To the natural question, why Romney chose to send his pictures to the Spring Gardens Exhibition and not to the Royal Academy, there is no satisfactory answer. Though one of the most distinguished painters of the day, and a man of great natural courtesy, it so happened, whether through pride on his part or ill-nature or bad taste on that of others, he was never even elected an Associate of the Royal Academy. Reynolds, it would seem, disliked both the man and his works; and such was the omnipotence of the President, that on whomsoever his evil eye lighted, that person had small chance for the honours of the Academy.

It happened that Cumberland, the dramatist, conceived a great regard for Romney, and tried to propitiate Garrick, who was of course of the Reynolds' faction. "I brought him," says Cumberland, "to see Romney's pictures, hoping to interest him in his favour. A large family piece unluckily arrested his attention; a gentleman in a close-buckled bobwig, and a scarlet waistcoat laced with gold, with his wife and children (some sitting, some standing), had taken possession of some yards of canvas, very much, as it

appeared, to their own satisfaction, for they were perfectly amused in a contented abstinence from all thought or action. Upon this unfortunate group, when Garrick had fixed his lynx's eyes, he began to put himself into the attitude of the gentleman, and, turning to Mr. Romney, "Upon my word, sir," said he, "this is a very regular, well-ordered family; and that is a very bright-rubbed mahogany table at which that motherly good lady is sitting; and this worthy gentleman in the scarlet waistcoat is doubtless a very excellent subject (to the State, I mean, if these are all his children), but not for your art, Mr. Romney, if you mean to pursue it with that success which I hope will attend you." The modest artist took the hint, as it was meant, in good part, and turned his family with their faces to the wall.

In 1773 Romney went to Italy, and was not back in London till June 1775. His return was announced by the benevolent muse of Cumberland, in strains flattering and friendly; and he had no reason to suppose that he was either forgotten or neglected. Sitters flocked to his studio, and persons of taste looked in to see how far Italy had inspired him. On the death of Cotes, the Academician, he established himself at his house in Cavendish Square, and so much did his commissions amount to, and so loudly was his fame announced, that Reynolds began to believe the town in earnest when they said he had lost the half of his empire to Romney. Lord Thurlow said, in his ironical way, "There are two factions in art, and

I am of the Romney faction;" and this careless expression was bandied about to the sore annoyance of Reynolds, who, when compelled to speak of his rival, merely indicated him by saying, "The man in Cavendish Square."

Much of the prime of his life was squandered in designing and sketching works of an historical nature, which, having merely indicated them on the canvas, he touched no more. Little encouragement, indeed, was given to poetic works at that period; and Romney had been obliged to destroy, for want of house-room, some of his larger paintings that had failed to attract the public. One cause of the number of fine paintings being left unfinished was that, richly as his mind was stored with images, and greatly as he admired children, his fancy frequently failed him, and if the model which he procured to supply the deficiency happened not to come to appointment, he was inconsolable, and often threw the picture aside, never to resume it. When he painted "Tragedy and Comedy nursing Shakespeare," "The Infant Shakespeare attended by the Passions," and "The Alope" —in all of which a naked infant was introduced—he had for a model a fine child belonging to a soldier of the Guards. It happened that the child sickened and died while these pictures were in progress, and on that account they were never finished. His "Group of Children in a Boat drifted out to Sea" was left incomplete from the same cause. His "Shepherd Boy asleep Watched by his Dog at the Approach of a

Thunderstorm" was laid aside because his errand-boy, who served as a model, had to be dismissed for misconduct. Another picture, "The Girl Mourning over her Fawn just Killed by Lightning," was tossed into the corner when in a very forward state (not, as might be supposed, because there was no lightning) for want of a fawn to work from. Hayley was charmed with this picture, and carried it off as it was. "The Milkpail overturned by a She-Goat anxious to Approach its Kid which a Milking-Girl is Fondling" was also left incomplete for want of a suitable goat. "I could enumerate many other unfinished fancy pieces," says the Rev. John Romney, his son, "in all stages of progress, which, from divers impeding causes, were suffered to accumulate in every corner of the house: no picture was set aside from any difficulty in the art itself. I could also mention several causes which contributed to produce the vast heaps of unfinished portraits that obstructed the passage to his gallery. The chief were the poverty or the meanness of the parties to whom the pictures belonged. I have known ladies' portraits, amounting in value to a thousand guineas, remain unfinished for many months for want of a model with fine hands and arms. . . . It was no uncommon circumstance, too, that a *chère amie*, having been brought to sit for her portrait, both she and the picture were deserted before the latter was finished."

Of the painter's prices and modes of study we have plenty of information from his biographers, with all

of whom he lived on terms of close intimacy. In the year 1785 a regular account of his sitters was kept by Robinson, one of his pupils; the earnings of the pencil amounted to £3635. The charge for a head had gradually risen from two guineas to twenty; a kit-cat from three guineas to thirty; a half-length from four guineas to forty; what is called a half whole-length from five guineas to sixty; and a whole length from six guineas to eighty. He was fond of painting by lamp-light, but wore a shade to obstruct the glare. When tired of this, he amused himself by making designs in chalks, sometimes as large as life —more frequently of the size of his portfolio—on which he wrought till bedtime. "He mostly," says his son, "painted a gentleman's three-quarter portrait in three or four sittings, especially if no hands were introduced. The first sitting was three-quarters of an hour, the others about an hour and a half each. During the spring months he frequently had five sitters a day, and occasionally even six. The only time he had for fancy subjects was in the intervals between the sitters, or when they disappointed him, and having a canvas at hand, he often regarded such a disappointment as a schoolboy would a holiday. He often wrought thirteen hours a day, commencing at eight or earlier, and, except when engaged out, which was not frequently, prolonging his application till eleven at night."

Of the wear and tear, mental and bodily, of such close application the artist was not unconscious.

"My health," he writes in after life, "is not at all constant; my nerves give way; and I have no time to go in quest of pleasure, to prevent a decline of health. My hands are full, and I shall be forced to refuse new faces at last to be enabled to finish the numbers I have in an unfinished state. I shall regret the necessity of forbearing to take new faces; there is a delight in novelty greater than in the profit gained by sending them home finished, but it must be done."

To recruit his failing powers, however, Romney now retired annually for a summer month or so to the residence of Hayley, at Eartham, in Sussex. Here he supped full with flattery, served up in prose as well as verse. Lifting the curtain of this little stage, we find ourselves in the midst of a select coterie of poets, poetesses, painters, and wits—Hayley himself, Miss Anna Seward (the Swan of Lichfield), Charlotte Smith, Eliza Heron, Romney, and Cowper, besides others with or without name, not less willing to admire the liberality of their entertainer, and all on marvellous good terms with themselves and with each other. Cowper sat once for his portrait, and rewarded the artist for a very admirable work by a sonnet which weighs in the balance like current gold when compared to the glittering Birmingham ware with which the rest of the circle were used to pay him—

> Romney! expert infallibly to trace
> On chart or canvas, not the form alone
> And semblance, but, however faintly shown,
> The mind's impression, too, on every face,

With strokes that Time ought never to erase—
Thou hast so pencill'd mine; and though I own
The subject worthless, I have never known
The artist shining with superior grace;
But this I mark, that symptoms none of woe
In thy incomparable work appear:
Well, I am satisfied it should be so,
Since, on maturer thought, the cause is clear;
For in my looks what sorrow could'st thou see
While I was Hayley's guest, and sat to thee?

This coterie, among but not of whom was sometimes Cowper, lived in—it might be said *upon*—the mutual interchange of the most ludicrous flattery. When they gathered together at the breakfast-table, the ordinary greetings were "Sappho" and "Pindar" and "Raphael"; they asked for bread-and-butter in quotations, and "still their speech was song." They then separated for some hours: poetasters, male and female, retired, big with undelivered verse; and Romney proceeded to sketch from the lines of Hayley or make designs as he had suggested. When the hour appointed for taking the air came, the painter went softly to the door of the poetess, opened it gently, and if he found her

"With looks all staring from Parnassian dreams,"

he shut it and retreated; if, on the contrary, she was unemployed, he said, "Come, Muse," and she answered, "Coming, Raphael," and so the time flew by. Romney, on hearing Miss Seward speak affectionately of

her father, painted her portrait, and desired it might be given to the parent she loved so much. The poetess was eager, in concert with Hayley, to make some return; and truly the painter must have been a simple man if he failed to be astonished with the result of their joint efforts. Of the eighty-and-eight lines called "Coming to Eartham" and "Leaving Eartham," there are only two which have reference to the subject, and full fifty-six which refer to no subject at all.

In connection with his contributions to Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery, he was subjected to the ruder criticism of Lord Chancellor Thurlow, who is reported to have said to him, "Romney, before you paint Shakespeare, do for God's sake read him!"

To an aid of a softer kind many have imputed the chief charms of Romney's best pictures. "He had the great advantage," says Hayley, "of studying the features and mental character of a lady on whom Nature has lavished such singular beauty and such extraordinary talents, as have rendered her not only the favourite model of Romney, whom she honoured with her filial tenderness and esteem, but the idolised wife of an accomplished ambassador." This was, of course, Lady Hamilton. One of the earliest fancy pictures of her was "Sensibility," of which Hayley thus gives the origin:—

"During my visit to Romney in November 1786, I happened to find him one morning contemplating

George Romney *Mansel.*

EMMA, LADY HAMILTON

a recently-coloured head on a small canvas. I expressed my admiration of this unfinished work in the following terms: 'This is a most happy beginning; you never painted a female head with such exquisite expression; you have only to enlarge your canvas, introduce the shrub mimosa growing in a vase, with a hand of this figure approaching its leaves, and you may call your picture a personification of sensibility.' 'I like your suggestion,' replied the painter, 'and will enlarge my canvas immediately.' 'Do so,' I answered with exultation, 'and I will hasten to an eminent nurseryman at Hammersmith and bring you the most beautiful plant I can find.'"

In 1791, just before her marriage, he thus writes to Hayley: "At present, and the greatest part of the summer, I shall be engaged in painting pictures from the divine lady: I cannot give her any other epithet, for I think her superior to all womankind. I have two pictures to paint of her for the Prince of Wales. She says she must see you before she leaves England, which will be in the beginning of September. She asked me if you would not write my life: I told her you had begun it; then, she said, she hoped you would have much to say of her in the life, as she prided herself in being the model." And again, in July, "I dedicate my time to this charming lady; there is a prospect of her leaving town with Sir William for two or three weeks. They are very much hurried at present, as everything is going on for a speedy marriage, and all the world following

her and talking of her; so that if she had not more good sense than vanity, her brain must be turned. The pictures I have begun are 'Joan of Arc,' a 'Magdalen,' and a 'Bacchante,' for the Prince of Wales; and another I am to begin as a companion to the 'Bacchante.'"

None of these pictures, however, was destined to be finished, as very soon the beautiful model set out on a tour of visits in the country, and then left England with her husband, much to the artist's chagrin.

The death of Reynolds, which occurred in 1792, quickened the ambition of Romney. He was advancing in years, and knew his health to be much impaired, but he now earnestly resolved to employ the days which yet remained on works that might be worthy of remembrance when he was gone. The conversation of Cowper and the persuasions of Hayley induced Romney to seek in Milton for fitting subjects for his pencil. The idea of a Milton Gallery on the lines of Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery seems to have appealed to him. On this subject he writes to Hayley, "My plan is, if I live and retain my senses and sight, to paint six other subjects from Milton—three where Satan is the hero, and three from Adam and Eve—perhaps six of each. I have ideas of them all, and I may say sketches; but alas! I cannot begin them for a year or two; and if my name were mentioned I should hear nothing but abuse, and that I cannot bear. Fear has always been my enemy; my

nerves are too weak for supporting anything in public."

The difficulty which art encounters in this land, of aiding its conceptions from the living model, was often felt by Romney; and never more than now, when he dedicated so much of his time to works of an historical nature. In order to remedy this he sent £100 to Flaxman to purchase for him a number of the finest casts which could be found in Rome. Romney, when he received these, soon discovered that he wanted a studio, where his treasures might find sanctuary, and himself room for executing a series of splendid pictures which at present lay embodied in his fancy. He determined to buy land and build a suitable structure, but his son persuaded him to content himself with purchasing a house on Holly Bush Hill, Hampstead. The artist immediately began making alterations in his new home. On the site of the stables he built a gallery for painting and sculpture, and enclosed part of the garden for a riding-school. All that seemed wanting now was for the painter to dip his brush in historical colours, and give a visible existence to some of those magnificent pictures with which his imagination teemed. He set up his easels; put his colours in order; and then stretching himself on a sofa, gazed down upon London. The old demon of nervous dejection had waited for the moment of apparent satisfaction and opening glory to stoop once more on his prey. Hayley visited him, and offered to sit to him for his

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portrait. The very effort of beginning work again, under the encouragement of his old friend, seems to have done him good for a time. He lingered in Hampstead, brush in hand, fondly hoping some sudden emotion would restore him. With trembling and uncertain hand he dashed in a scene from "Macbeth"; half-painted a portrait of himself with spectacles on; complained of a swimming in his head, and a paralytic numbness in his right hand; and then removed the brush for ever.

The summer of 1799 came; but Romney could neither enjoy the face of Nature, nor feel pleasure in his studio and gallery. A visible and increasing mental anguish sat upon his brow, and his weakness grew upon him. His heart turned towards the north where his son resided, and where his wife, surviving the cold neglect and long estrangement of her husband, lived yet to prove the depth of woman's love. Without imparting his intentions to any one, Romney arrived among his friends at Kendal in the summer of 1799. Though sinking in mind and body he continued to correspond with Hayley. In his letters he spoke of the attentions of his wife with the tenderest gratitude. He was much looking forward to the return of his brother, Colonel Romney, from the East Indies. But when the Colonel arrived and said, "Brother, do you not know me?" Romney looked eagerly in his face, burst into an agony of tears, half-articulated some words of recognition, and then and for ever forgot him and all else that loved

him in the world. He sank into helpless imbecility, and died on the 15th of November 1802. His monument in the parish church at Dalton bears this inscription: "So long as Genius and Talent shall be respected his fame will live."

CHAPTER IX

JOHN COPLEY

1737–1815

JOHN SINGLETON COPLEY, the painter of "The Death of Chatham" and "The Death of Major Pierson" at the National Gallery, and of "The Three Youngest Princesses" at Buckingham Palace, was born at Boston, in America, in the year 1737. His father was of English descent, but had long resided in Ireland, and only removed to America with his Irish bride so short a time before the birth of our artist, that he has sometimes been claimed as a native of Ireland. In America, accordingly, he owes his first inspiration in art, which came upon him, it seems, early enough. When some seven or eight years old, he was observed to absent himself from the family circle for several hours at a time, and was traced to a lonely room, on whose bare walls he had drawn in charcoal a group of martial figures engaged in some nameless adventure. Boston at this time had neither academy of arts nor private instructors, and Copley therefore, like Benjamin West, had to educate himself.

Of Copley's early works no better account can be rendered than that they were portraits and domestic

groups, to which the wild wood scenery of America usually formed backgrounds. His fame found its way to England as early as 1760, when a painting of a "Boy and a tame Squirrel" was sent from Boston, without any letter or artist's name, to one of the exhibitions of the Royal Academy. Its natural action and deep, vivid colouring made the Academicians anxious to give it a good place, but they were at a loss what to say about it in the catalogue; from the frame on which it was stretched being American pine, they called the work American. It proved to be Copley's portrait of his half-brother, Henry Pelham, and was of such excellence as naturally raised high expectations.

In 1767, when he was now thirty years old, he seems to have been already thinking of coming to Europe. "I would gladly exchange my situation for the serene climate of Italy or even that of England," he writes to his friend Captain Bruce, "but what would be the advantage of seeking improvement at such an outlay of time and money? I am now in as good business as the poverty of this place will admit. I make as much as if I were a Raphael or a Correggio; and three hundred guineas a year, my present income, is equal to nine hundred a year in London. With regard to reputation, you are sensible that fame cannot be durable where pictures are confined to sitting-rooms, and regarded only for the resemblance they bear to the originals. Were I sure of doing as well in Europe as here, I would not hesitate a moment in

my choice. . . . My ambition whispers me to run this risk, and I think the time draws near that must determine my future fortune."

In something of the same strain, and nearly at the same time, Copley wrote to his countryman West, then in high favour at the British Court. "You will see by the two pictures I have lately sent to your Exhibition what improvement I may still make, and what encouragement I may reasonably expect. . . . If your answer should be in favour of my visit to Europe, I must beg of you to send it as soon as you can. . . . Your friendly invitation to your house, and your offer to propose me as a member of the Society, are matters which I shall long remember. . . ."

What the answers of Bruce and West are is not known; but seven years elapsed before Copley set sail for Italy, by way of England, where he arrived in August 1774. It was his misfortune to choose for his companion in Italy an artist of the name of Carter, a cross-grained, self-conceited person, who kept a regular journal of his tour, in which he remorselessly set down the smallest trifle that could bear a construction unfavourable to the American's character. His description of Copley in his travelling trim is perhaps worth quoting, if no more: "He had on one of those white French bonnets which, turned on one side, admit of being pulled over the ears; under this was a yellow and red silk handkerchief, with a large Catherine wheel flambeaued upon it, such as may be seen upon the necks of those

John Copley *Mansell*

THE DEATH OF MAJOR PIERSON

delicate ladies who cry Malton oysters; this flowed half-way down his back. He wore a red-brown, or rather cinnamon, greatcoat, with a friar's cape, and worsted binding of a yellowish-white; it hung near his heels, out of which peeped his boots; under his arm he carried the sword which he bought in Paris, and a hickory stick with an ivory head. Joined to this dress, he was very thin, pale, and a little pock-marked, with prominent eyebrows and small eyes, which after fatigue seemed a day's march in his head." Copley's description of this man, on a subsequent occasion, was, "a sort of snail which crawled over a man in his sleep, and left its slime, and no more!"

In the latter end of the year 1775 he reached London, and set up his easel at 25 George Street, Hanover Square. West was as good as his word; he introduced him to the Academy, where he became an Associate in 1777, and in 1783 the King sanctioned his election as a Royal Academician. By this time Copley's name had been established by works of eminent merit, among the first of which was "The Death of Chatham." The fame of this picture, and the value he put upon it, brought him, along with many friends, a few detractors. To have refused 1500 guineas for it was, in the eyes of some, offence enough. He was advised to exhibit the picture, and naturally preferring the time when the town was fullest, hired a room, and announced his intention, without reflecting that the Royal Academy Exhibition was about to open. He met with unexpected opposition. Sir

William Chambers remonstrated; the room which was chosen belonged to the King; it was his duty, he said, to protect the interests of the Royal Academy, which were sure to suffer from such partial exhibitions. "No one wishes Mr. Copley greater success," he sarcastically wrote, "than his humble servant, who, if he may be allowed to give his opinion, thinks no place so proper as the Royal Exhibition to promote either the sale of prints, or the raffle for the picture, which he understands are Mr. Copley's motives; or, if that should be objected to, he thinks no place so proper as Mr. Copley's own house, where the idea of a raree-show will not be quite so striking as in any other place, and where his own presence will not fail to be of service to his views."

To this impertinence Copley made no reply. The picture was engraved by Bartolozzi (who was paid £2000 for the job), and over 2000 prints very quickly sold. "This work," quoth George Washington on receiving a copy, "highly valuable in itself, is rendered more estimable in my eye, when I remember that America gave birth to the celebrated artist who produced it."

Amid all his historical work, Copley continued to paint portraits, and had in that way considerable employment. Among others he took the likeness of Lord Mansfield. But it is for groups of figures that he is most worth remembering, and of these there is at least one amusing story. A certain man came to Copley, and had himself, his wife, and seven children

all included in one family piece. "It wants but one thing," said he, "and that is the portrait of my first wife—for this one is my second." "But," said the artist, "she is dead, you know, sir; what can I do? She is only to be admitted as an angel." "Oh no, not at all," answered the other, "she must come in as a woman—no angels for me." The portrait was added, but some time elapsed before the person came back; when he returned he had a stranger lady on his arm. "I must have another cast of your hand, Copley," he said; "an accident befell my second wife; this lady is my third, and she is come to have her likeness included in the family picture." The painter complied, the likeness was introduced, and the husband looked with a glance of satisfaction at his three spouses; not so the lady; she remonstrated; never was such a thing heard of—out her predecessors must go. The artist painted them out accordingly, and had to bring an action at law to obtain payment for the portraits which he had obliterated.

Copley died in 1815, at the age of seventy-eight years. We know little of his early days, when the boy on the wild shores of America achieved works of surpassing beauty; he is but remembered in his declining years, when the world had sobered down his mood and the ecstasy of the blood was departed.

He sometimes made experiments in colours; the methods of the Greeks, the elder Italians, and the schools of Florence and Venice he was long in quest of; and he wrote out receipts for composing those

lustrous hues in which Titian and Correggio excelled. For the worth of his discoveries read not his receipts, but look at his works. Of all that he ever painted, nothing surpasses his "Boy and Squirrel" for fine depth and beauty of colour, and this was done presumably before he had heard the name of Titian pronounced.

Copley shares with West the reproach of want of natural warmth, and uniting much stateliness with little passion. As to his personal character, it seems to have been, in all essential respects, that of an honourable and accomplished gentleman.

CHAPTER X

BENJAMIN WEST

1738–1820

BENJAMIN WEST was born at Springfield, in the State of Pennsylvania, in the year 1738. His family had been settled at Long Crandon, in Buckinghamshire, for many generations, and embraced the tenets of the Quakers; they emigrated in 1699, his father not joining them till 1714.

In the month of June 1745, when Benjamin was but six years old, one of his sisters came with her infant child to spend a few days at her father's. When the child was asleep in the cradle, Mrs. West invited her daughter to gather flowers in the garden, and committed the infant to the care of Benjamin during their absence, giving him a fan to flap away the flies from molesting his little charge. After some time the child happened to smile in its sleep, and its beauty attracted his attention. He looked at it with a pleasure which he had never before experienced, and observing some paper on a table, together with pens and red and black ink, he seized them with agitation, and endeavoured to delineate a portrait, although at this age he had never seen an engraving or a picture. Hearing the approach of his mother and sister, he

endeavoured to conceal what he had been doing; but the old lady, observing his confusion, inquired what he was about, and requested him to show her the paper. He obeyed, entreating her not to be angry. Mrs. West, after looking for some time at the drawing with evident pleasure, said to her daughter, "I declare he has made a likeness of little Sally," and kissed him with much fondness and satisfaction.

Soon afterwards the young artist was sent to a school in the neighbourhood. During the hours of leisure he was permitted to draw with pen and ink, for it did not occur to any of the family to provide him with better materials. In the course of the summer a party of Indians came to pay their annual visit to Springfield, and being amused with the sketches of birds and flowers which Benjamin showed them, they taught him to prepare the red and yellow colours with which they painted their ornaments. To these his mother added blue, by giving him a piece of indigo, so that he was then put in possession of the three primary colours. The Indians also taught him to be an expert archer, and he was sometimes in the practice of shooting birds for models when he thought their plumage would look well in a picture.

His drawings at length attracted the attention of the neighbours; and some of them, happening to regret that he had no pencils, he inquired what kind of things these were, and they were described to him as small brushes made of camel's hair fastened in a quill. As there were, however, no camels in America,

he could not think of any substitute, till he happened to cast his eyes on a black cat, the favourite of his father, when, in the tapering fur of her tail, he discovered the means of supplying what he wanted. He immediately armed himself with his mother's scissors, and laying hold of Grimalkin with all due caution, and a proper attention to her feelings, cut off the fur at the end of her tail, and with this made his first pencil. But the tail only furnished him with one, and he soon stood in need of a further supply. He then had recourse to the animal's back, his depredations upon which were so frequently repeated that his father observed the altered appearance of his favourite, and lamented it as the effect of disease. The artist, with suitable marks of contrition, informed him of the true cause, and the old gentleman was so much amused with his ingenuity, that if he rebuked him it was certainly not in anger.

In the following year a Mr. Pennington came to visit Mr. West. This gentleman was also a member of the Society of Friends, and though strictly attentive to the peculiar observances of the sect, was a man of pleasant temper and indulgent disposition. He noticed the drawings of birds and flowers round the room, unusual ornaments in the house of a Quaker, and heard with surprise that they were the work of his little cousin, and promised to send him a box of paints on his return to Philadelphia. The arrival of the box (and with it some engravings) was an era in the history of the painter and his art; it was received

with feelings of delight which only a similar mind can justly appreciate. He opened it, and in the colours, the oils, and the pencils found all his wants supplied, even beyond his utmost conception. But who can describe the surprise with which he beheld the engravings; he who had never seen any picture but his own drawings, nor knew that such an art as the engraver's existed! He sat over the box with enamoured eyes; his mind was in a flutter of joy; and he could not refrain from constantly touching the different articles to ascertain that they were real. At night he placed the box on a chair near his bed, and as often as he was overpowered by sleep he started suddenly and stretched out his hand to satisfy himself that the possession of such a treasure was not merely a pleasing dream. He rose at dawn, and carried the box to a room in the garret, where he immediately began to imitate the figures in the engravings. Enchanted by his art he forgot the school hours, and for several days successively he thus withdrew and devoted himself to painting. The schoolmaster, observing his absence, sent to ask the cause of it. Mrs. West went and found him in the garret employed on the picture. Her anger was appeased by the sight of the performance, and changed to a very different feeling. She saw, not a mere copy, but a composition from two of the engravings. Sixty-seven years afterwards the writer of these memoirs (John Galt) had the gratification to see this piece, on which occasion the painter declared to him that there were inventive touches of

art in his first juvenile essay which, with all his subsequent knowledge and experience, he had not been able to surpass.

Not long afterwards Mr. Pennington took him on a visit to Philadelphia, where he was shown some actual pictures, and the works of Fresnoy and Richardson on painting. On his return to Springfield one of his schoolfellows took him for a ride into the plantations, and West inquired how he was to ride. "Behind me," said the boy; but Benjamin, full of the dignity of the profession to which he felt himself destined, answered that he never would ride behind anybody. The boy told him his father intended to apprentice him to a tailor, and asked what West intended to be. He replied that he should like to be a painter. "A painter!" exclaimed the boy; "what sort of a trade is that? I never heard of such a thing." "A painter," said West, "is a companion for kings and emperors." "Surely you are mad," replied the boy, "for there are no such people in America." "Very true," answered Benjamin, "but there are plenty in other parts of the world." The other, still more amazed, reiterated, "You are surely quite mad." To this the enthusiast replied by asking him if he really intended to be a tailor. "Most certainly," answered the other. "Then you may ride by yourself, for I will no longer keep you company," said West, and alighting, immediately returned home.

West now seriously devoted himself to painting, and after some time in Philadelphia went to New

York, where he painted many portraits. In 1759 the harvest in Italy fell short, and he took advantage of the departure of a vessel laden with corn from Philadelphia to visit Italy. He arrived in Rome in July 1760, and it being mentioned in his hotel that he was an American and a Quaker come to study the fine arts, the circumstance seemed so extraordinary that it reached the ears of Mr. Robinson, afterwards Lord Grantham, who immediately found himself possessed of an irresistible desire to see him, and that very evening presented him to the blind Cardinal Albani. The Cardinal, fancying that an American must be an Indian, exclaimed, "Is he black or white?" and on being told he was very fair, "What, as fair as I am?" cried the Cardinal still more surprised, an expression which occasioned a good deal of mirth at the Cardinal's expense, for his complexion was of the darkest Italian olive, and West's even of more than the usual degree of English fairness. The Cardinal after some other short questions invited West to come near him, and running his hands over his features, still more attracted the attention of the company to the stranger by the admiration which he expressed at the form of his head.

At this time Mengs was in the zenith of his popularity, and West was introduced to him. Mengs asked to see some of his work, and West asked Mr. Robinson to sit for his portrait. This was kept a secret, and when the portrait was shown to the company there was a great discussion about it; most

thought it the work of Mengs, but Dance dissented. On Mr. Robinson announcing that Dance was right, "By whom then?" vociferated every one, "for there is no other painter now in Rome capable of executing anything so good." "By that young gentleman there," was the reply. At once all eyes were bent towards him, and the Italians, in their way, ran and embraced him.

In 1763 West arrived in London, and it was not long before he was offered £700 a year by Lord Rockingham to paint historical pictures for his house in Yorkshire. This offer, however, he refused, and shortly afterwards he went to America to fetch his bride, whom he married at St. Martin's in the Fields in 1765.

In Archbishop Drummond, West found one of the most active and efficient patrons that he had yet met with, and by him he was introduced to the notice of the King, whose particular favourite he at once became, and always remained. For Drummond he had painted "Agrippina landing with the Ashes of Germanicus," and it was this picture that he took to show to the King and Queen. "There is another subject which corresponds to this one," said the King, after praising the "Agrippina," "and I believe it also has never been well painted; I mean the final departure of Regulus from Rome. Don't you think it would make a fine picture?" The artist replied that it was undoubtedly a magnificent subject. "Then," said his Majesty, "you shall paint it for me," and

sending an attendant for a volume of Livy, he himself read the passage giving the subject of the picture.

During the progress of this picture the artist was frequently invited to spend the evening at Buckingham House, where he was often detained by the King as late as eleven o'clock on topics connected with the best means of promoting the study of the fine arts in the kingdom. It was in these conversations that the plan of the Royal Academy was digested. West and Reynolds had withdrawn from the Incorporated Artists, a body that had been founded in 1765, disgusted with the bickering animosities which disgraced the proceedings at their meetings, and it happened that when West waited on the King with his sketch of the "Departure of Regulus," the newspapers contained some account of the matter. His Majesty inquired the cause and particulars of the schism, and expressed his readiness to patronise any association which might be formed more immediately calculated to improve the arts. West communicated this to Chambers, Moser, and Cotes, and it was agreed that the four should constitute themselves a committee to draw up the plan of the Academy. The King not only approved of their determination, but took a great personal interest in the scheme, and even drew up several of the laws himself with his own hand. He was particularly anxious that the whole design should be kept a profound secret, being apprehensive that it might be converted into some vehicle of political influence. The Incorporated

Benjamin West

QUEEN CHARLOTTE AND FAMILY

Artists were also busy, and had elected as their President Mr. Kirby, who had been Preceptor in Perspective to the King, and had deservedly gained great celebrity by his treatise on that art. Having free access to the royal presence, and never hearing from his Majesty anything respecting the Academy, Kirby was so satisfied that the rumours about it were untrue, that in his inaugural address from the chair he assured the Incorporated Artists that there was not the slightest intention entertained of establishing a Royal Academy of Arts.

It so happened that when West took his picture of "Regulus" to show to the King and Queen Kirby was announced, and the King ordered him to be shown in. When he looked at the picture he expressed himself with greath warmth in his praise, and asked who had painted it, upon which the King introduced West to him. As Preceptor to the King, he had been accustomed to take liberties which ought to have terminated with the duties of that office; but his surprise at finding the picture the production of so young a man betrayed him into a fatal indiscretion. "Your Majesty never mentioned anything of this work to me," he said, in a tone which evidently displeased the King; but the discretion of the unfortunate man was gone, and he inquired in a still more disagreeable manner, "Who made the frame?" West, anxious to turn the conversation, mentioned the maker's name; but this only served to precipitate Mr. Kirby with still greater imprudence, and he answered somewhat

sharply, "That person is not your Majesty's workman; it ought to have been made by ——." The King appeared a good deal surprised at all this, but replied in an easy good-humoured way, "Kirby, whenever you are able to paint me a picture like this, your friend shall make the frame." The unhappy man, however, could not be restrained, and he turned round to West, and in a tone which greatly lessened the compliment said, "I hope you intend to exhibit this picture?" The artist answered that as it was painted for his Majesty, the exhibition must depend on his pleasure. The King immediately said, "Assuredly I shall be very happy to let the work be shown to the public." "Then, Mr. West," added Kirby, "you will send it to my exhibition." "No," interposed the King firmly, "it must go to my exhibition—to the Royal Academy." Poor Kirby was thunderstruck; only two nights before, in the confidence of his intercourse with the King, he had declared that even the design of forming such an institution was not contemplated. His colour forsook him, and his countenance became yellow with mortification. He bowed with profound humility, and instantly retired, nor did he long survive the shock.

On the day following, a meeting of the artists who had withdrawn from the incorporated association was to be held at the house of Wilton the sculptor, in order to receive the code of laws, and to nominate the office-bearers of the Academy. In the course of the morning, Penny, who was intended to be appointed

Professor of Painting, called on West, and mentioned that he had been with Reynolds, and that he thought, for some unfathomable reason or another, that distinguished artist would not attend the meeting. Soon after Moser likewise called, and stated the same thing. West was much perplexed at this information; for it had been arranged with the King that Reynolds, although not in the secret, nor at all consulted in the formation of the Academy, should be the President. He therefore went immediately to his house and informed him of the meeting. Reynolds was much surprised to hear matters were so far advanced, as Kirby had assured him that there was no truth whatever in the rumour of any such design being in agitation, and that he thought it would be derogatory to attend a meeting of persons without sanction or authority. To this West answered, "As you have been told by Mr. Kirby that there is no intention to form any institution of the kind, and by me that there is, that even the rules are framed, and the officers condescended on, yourself to be President, I must insist on your going with me to the meeting, where you will be satisfied which of us deserves to be credited in this business."

In the evening, at the usual hour, West went to take tea with Reynolds before going to the meeting, and it so fell out, either from accident or design, that it was not served till a full hour later than common, not indeed till the hour fixed by the artists to assemble at Wilton's, so that by the time they arrived there

the meeting was on the point of breaking up, conceiving that as neither Reynolds nor West had come something unexpected and extraordinary must have happened. But on their appearing a burst of satisfaction manifested the anxiety that had been felt, and without any further delay the company proceeded to carry into effect the wishes of the King. A report of the proceedings was made to his Majesty next morning, who gave his sanction to the election of the officers, and the Academy was thus, on the 10th December 1768, constituted.

About this period West had finished his "Death of Wolfe," which excited a great sensation, both on account of its general merits, and for representing the characters in the modern military costume. The King mentioned that he had been informed that the dignity of the subject had been thereby impaired, observing that it was thought very ridiculous to exhibit heroes in coats, breeches, and cocked hats. To which West replied, that Reynolds' opinion had been asked by Archbishop Drummond, and had urged him earnestly to adopt the classical costume, in view of the state of the public taste, to which he had replied that if, after Reynolds had seen the picture, he disapproved of it, he would consign it to the closet; that Reynolds came, and, without speaking, after his first cursory glance, seated himself before the picture, and examined it with deep and minute attention for about half-an-hour. He then rose and said to Drummond, "Mr. West has conquered. He has

treated his subject as it ought to be treated. I retract my objections against the introduction of any other circumstances into historical pictures than those which are requisite and appropriate; and I foresee that this picture will not only become one of the most popular, but occasion a revolution in art."

On Reynolds' death in 1792 West was unanimously elected his successor, a choice that was not more a debt of gratitude on the part of the Academy to one who had essentially contributed to its formation, than a testimony of respect deservedly merited by the conduct and genius of the artist, who, when the compass, number, and variety of his pictures are considered, was, at that period, decidedly the greatest historical painter then living who had been born a British subject.

CHAPTER XI

RICHARD COSWAY

1740–1821

RICHARD COSWAY was born in 1740 at Tiverton, in Devonshire. His father was master of the public school there, but the boy was educated at a school in Okeford. It is alleged that the sight of certain Flemish pictures, including two of Rubens, which were possessed by the Cosway family, first awoke the love of painting in the mind of Richard, but it met with little sympathy at his father's fireside. The astonished parent saw his son, at the age of seven, neglecting his lessons and devoting all his time to what he called "the idle pursuit of drawing." Admonition first and then chastisement were employed without effect; and it was only at the intervention of his uncle, the Mayor of Tiverton, and a judicious neighbour, Oliver Peard, that the boy was permitted to make drawings in his spare time; and, owing to their kindly generosity, that at the age of thirteen he was able to go to London for instruction. He was first placed under Hudson, with whom Reynolds had studied, and next under Shipley, who kept a drawing-school in the Strand. The young student's skill in drawing became so great that in the course of a few

years he obtained no less than five premiums, some of five and one of ten guineas, from the Society of Arts. When his apprenticeship with Shipley came to an end he became a teacher in a Paris drawing-school, and was also employed, writes Smith in "Nollekens and his Times," "to make drawings of heads for the shops, as well as fancy miniatures, and free subjects for snuff-boxes for the jewellers, mostly from ladies whom he knew; and from the money gained and the gaiety of the company he kept, he rose from one of the dirtiest of boys to one of the smartest of men."

To rise from indigence to affluence, and step out of the company of indifferent daubers into that of lords and ladies of high degree, could not be accomplished, Cosway imagined, without putting on airs of superiority and a dress rivalling that of an Eastern ambassador. His affectation was not unobserved by his brethren; his fine clothes, splendid horse, and black servant were offences after their kind; and caricaturists gratified their spite and replenished their pockets by satirising him as the "Macaroni Miniature Painter." The man whom Dighton drew and Earlom engraved was likely soon to be heard of, and their united lampoon upon him as "Billy Dimple Sitting for his Picture" had no small effect at the time. Nor has Smith (in "Nollekens and his Times") failed to favour us with a portrait. "I have often," says he, "seen Cosway at the elder Christie's picture sales, full dressed in his sword and bag (wig), with a

small three-cornered hat on the top of his powdered toupée, and a mulberry silk coat profusely embroidered with scarlet strawberries." Besides the income which arose from his fine drawings and his numerous miniatures, Cosway derived occasional sums from old paintings which he purchased, repaired, and sold to such customers as had galleries to fill or rooms to decorate. This kind of trade in skilful hands has been found lucrative. But Cosway was no hoarder; his outlay kept pace with his income. He had expensive tastes; he was fond of old armour, old weapons, old books, and old furniture, and delighted in entertaining his friends splendidly. He wrought, or as artists prefer to say, studied hard; but he also lived hard. It was his pleasure to spend his money in the society of high and dissipated people, who laughed in secret at his folly, and while they encouraged extravagance to his face, derided it without mercy behind his back. They swallowed his champagne, gambled him out of the price of a dozen miniatures at a sitting, and then entertained their friends by giving caricatured accounts of his conduct and conversation, to which the lampoon of Dighton was but a joke. Cipriani used to relate that though Cosway would pass a whole night, nay, nights, in this kind of frivolous society, he never found him in bed, let him call ever so early the next morning. He rose with remorse at heart, laboured hard by day to repair the waste of the night, and formed all the while good resolutions which dispersed of their own accord when

the lamps were lighted and the hour of appointment approached.

Amid all this waste of vanity Cosway was rising in reputation. In 1771 he was elected Royal Academician, and imagining it necessary to support his new dignity by fresh efforts of his pencil, he sent to the exhibition for several successive years a few pictures chiefly of that kind which pertain to portrait and poetry. The "Rinaldo" and "Armida" were suggested by Tasso, and the heads were supplied by two of his titled sitters.

It was during this period of prosperity, and his enjoyment of the favour of the Prince of Wales, that Cosway married Maria Hadfield. She was a native of Italy, but of English parentage; and, besides her wit and beauty, had such taste and skill in art as rendered her worthy of the notice, when but eighteen years old, of Reynolds, Fuseli, and other masters of the English school. In addition to these attractions there was something romantic about her story. Her father kept a hotel for the accommodation of travellers on the Arno, and such was his prosperity that he was enabled to live, in process of time, like a wealthy gentleman. Four of his babies died suddenly and in succession, and when Maria, who was the fifth, was born, a trusty servant resolved to keep watch, for foul play was surmised. One day a favourite maid-servant went into the nursery, took the child in her arms, and dandling it said, "Pretty little creature! I have sent four before thee to heaven, I hope to send thee also." Being instantly seized and interrogated, she owned

that she had destroyed the other four children out of love—for of such was the kingdom of heaven.

Her foreign manners and extreme youth induced Cosway to keep his wife secluded till she mastered the language, and by her intercourse with intimate friends acquired a knowledge of society. She studied art, too, under her husband's instruction, and with such success that almost the first time she was seen in public she was pointed out as the lady who had painted some of the most lovely miniatures in the Royal Academy Exhibition. Her reputation was made at once; nothing was talked of but the great youth and the great talent of Mrs. Cosway, and one-half of the carriages that stopped at her husband's door contained sitters ambitious of the honours of her pencil. The painter, however, was too proud a man to permit his wife—much as he admired her talents—to paint professionally; this, no doubt, was in favour of domestic happiness, but much against her success in art. The impulse which professional rivalry gives was wanting, and on works which were only to be seen by a few, she wrought with less feeling and care than what artists bestow on paintings which challenge public examination.

Cosway, however inexorable in regard to painting, was more gentle in the matter of music, of which Maria was passionately fond; and, as he had a handsome house and a good income, he allowed her to indulge in those splendid nuisances called evening parties. The guests were numerous, and of all ranks

and callings that had any pretensions to be elegant; in short, all the lions of London were there to see and be seen, and the Prince of Wales was not an unfrequent visitor.

At this time Cosway was living in the central part of the house built for the Duke of Schomberg, in Pall Mall (lately occupied as the War Office), but finding this unsuitable for the display of his works and his finery, he now removed to the house at the west corner of Stratford Place. It happened that the figure of a lion was attached to this new residence, and as the painter was a little man, and, as Smith asserts, "not much unlike a monkey in the face," some wag whom he had offended stuck these lines on his door—

> When a man to a fair for a show brings a lion,
> 'Tis usual a monkey the sign-post to tie on;
> But here the old custom reversèd is seen,
> For the lion's without and the monkey's within.

To take the sting from this dull conceit, the artist removed to No. 20 in the same street, and proceeded to fit it up in a style of uncommon elegance. But amid all this splendour Cosway could not be called happy. His skill was still improving, his prices high, and his sitters numerous, nor had any one appeared to excel him in his own peculiar line. The Prince, too, continued his visits, nor had any one forsaken him in whose friendship he put trust. He had, moreover, begun to detect, it is said, among those who

seemed most charmed with his music and cheered with his wines a disposition to ridicule his taste and laugh at his pretensions. But what affected him most was the failing health of his wife, and as the climate of England seemed to affect her, he took her to Flanders and to Paris.

One day as he walked with her in the gallery of the Louvre, he was surprised at the extent of naked wall, and said, "Maria, my cartoons would look well here; and to say the truth, they seem much wanted." These were the works of Giulio Romano. Cosway prized them highly, and had refused a large price from Russia, saying he would not sell works of elegance to barbarians. He now offered them as a gift to the French King; they were accepted and hung up in the Louvre, and four splendid pieces of Gobelins tapestry were bestowed on the painter in token of royal gratitude; these he presented to the Prince of Wales. During his visit to Paris he painted the Duchess of Orleans and family, and the Duchess of Polignac, for the Duchess of Devonshire; yet he appears to have refused to paint either the King or Queen, saying he was there for the health of his wife and his own amusement, and not to study and toil.

His latter years were passed in pain, bodily and mental; a paralytic shock deprived him of the use of his right hand, and with it cut off one chief source of pleasure, the power of drawing. He loved to look at his collections of drawings, at his old armour, at his innumerable curiosities, and talk about the ancient

Richard Cosway

MARIE SMYTH

masters of the calling, and imagine what they would say were they now to revisit the earth and see the civilised grown savage and the savage civilised. He sometimes startled such visitors as did not know his way by saying, with a serious air, that he had just had an interview with Praxiteles or Apelles, and the former recommended a closer study of the living figure to the English Academy, and the other a less gaudy style of colour. Once as he sat at the dinner of the Royal Academy, he turned to one of his brethren and said: "Pitt, while he lived, discouraged genius; he has seen his error now; he paid me a visit this morning, and said, 'Cosway, the chief fault I committed on earth was in not encouraging your talents.'" "Ay, that was merely to soothe your vanity," said his friend, "for Pitt, after he had seen you, called on me, and said, 'Now, mark! Cosway will tell you at your dinner to-day that I waited on him and expressed contrition for not having employed his talents—don't believe one word he says, for he will tell nothing but his own absurd inventions.'" "I have heard Cosway relate conversations," says Smith, "which he held with King Charles I. so seriously, that I firmly believe he considered everything he uttered to be strictly true." It is a pity, but Smith could have returned this civility by reading to him a page or two from his "Life of Nollekens"!

Cosway died on the 4th July 1821, aged eighty-one years, and was buried in Marylebone, where a

small monument was erected to his memory. He long hesitated whether he should be buried in his native Devonshire, or be placed in the vault with Rubens at Antwerp. Humbler thoughts, however, came over him on hearing a sermon from Wesley on death and the grave. He followed a funeral into the vaults of a London church, and seeing the gilt mountings and the orderly way in which the coffins were arranged, said, "I prefer this to Antwerp or St. Paul's; bury me here."

CHAPTER XII

HENRY FUSELI

1738–1825

HENRY FUSELI—so he chose to spell his name—was born in the year 1741 at Zürich. His father, John Gaspard Fuessli, obtained some fame as a portrait and landscape painter, and from his "History of the Artists of Switzerland" his more eminent son drew some of the materials for an enlarged edition of Pilkington's "Dictionary of Painters."

At school he became an ardent devourer of the classics; but as soon as he was released from his class, he withdrew to a secret place to enjoy unmolested the works of Michel Angelo, of whose prints his father had a fine collection. He loved when he grew old to talk of the days of his youth, of the enthusiasm with which he surveyed the works of his favourite masters, and the secret pleasure which he took in acquiring forbidden knowledge. With candles which he stole from the kitchen, and pencils which his pocket-money was hoarded to procure, he pursued his studies till late at night, and made many copies from Michel Angelo and Raphael, by which he became familiar thus early with the style and ruling character of the two greatest masters

of the art. His schoolfellows perceived his talents; some of them purchased his works, and he presently found himself with more money in his pocket than he knew well what to do with. His taste was decidedly in favour of whatever is staring and extravagant. He bought a piece of flame-coloured silk, had it made into a coat, and in this splendid attire marched up the streets of Zürich; but the laughter and mockery of his companions put him into such a passion that he soon threw off the garment, and vowed never to be fine again.

With this twofold taste for literature and art upon him Fuseli was placed in the Humanity College of Zürich, where he became the bosom companion of Lavater, studied English, and conceived such a love for the works of Shakespeare, that he translated "Macbeth" into German, and from Shakespeare extended his affection to the chief masters in English literature. With Lavater he travelled to Vienna and thence to Berlin, where his acquaintance with English poetry induced Professor Sulzer to select him as one well qualified for opening a communication between the literature of Germany and that of England. Sir Robert Smith, British Ambassador at the Prussian Court, was consulted; and pleased with his lively genius, and his translations and drawings from "Macbeth" and "Lear," received him with much kindness, and advised him immediately to visit Britain. Lavater, who till now had continued his companion, presented him at parting with his card, on which he

had inscribed in German, *Do but the tenth part of what you can do.* "Hang that up in your bed-head," said the physiognomist; "obey it, and fame and fortune will be the result."

Fuseli arrived in England in 1763. "When I stood in London," said he, "and considered that I did not know one soul in all this vast metropolis, I became suddenly impressed with a sense of forlornness and burst into a flood of tears. An incident restored me. I had written a long letter to my father, and with this letter in my hand I inquired of a rude fellow whom I met the way to the post-office. My foreign accent provoked him to laughter, and as I stood cursing him in good Shakespearean English a gentleman kindly directed me to the object of my inquiry." He had letters of credit to Coutts the banker, and friendly introductions to Johnson, Millar, and Cadell the booksellers, who all received him with kindness. Later he found his way to the studio of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and submitted several of his drawings to the President's examination, who looked at them for some time, and then said, "How long have you studied in Italy?" "I never studied in Italy. I studied at Zürich. I am a native of Switzerland. Do you think I should study in Italy? and above all, is it worth while?" "Young man," said Reynolds, "were I the author of these drawings, and were offered ten thousand a year *not* to practise as an artist, I would reject the proposal with contempt." This very favourable opinion from one who considered all he said, and

was so remarkable for accuracy of judgment, decided the destiny of Fuseli; he forsook for ever the hard and thankless *trade* of literature, refused a living in the Church from some patron who had been struck with his talents, and addressed himself to painting with heart and hand.

The first effort of his pencil was "Joseph interpreting the Dream of Pharaoh's Chief Baker and Butler." I have been unable to learn how this work was executed or received; there was probably no contention for it among the patrons of art, since Johnson the bookseller became the purchaser. It hung in his house till it became cracked and faded, when Fuseli took it home to lay what he called "the villainous clutch of restoration upon it." The attempt was probably never made, and the picture was lost or destroyed.

Some ten years later (1770) he went to Rome with Armstrong the poet, his friend and counseller. It was a story he loved to repeat, how he lay on his back, day after day, and week succeeding week, with upturned and wondering eyes, musing on the splendid ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. . . . He fulfilled the injunctions of Reynolds—he ate and drank and slept and waked upon Michel Angelo. By a wiser course of study he might have schooled down his imagination; but he shunned the calmer company of Correggio and Raphael to quaff wine from the cup of the Polyphemus of modern art. He lived in a species of intoxication—affected the dress and mimicked the

manners of Michel, assumed the historic shoe, and would have preferred the sandal. In drawing and sketching he tried to imitate the master's dashing energy and extravagance of breadth, which induced Piranesi to exclaim, "Fuseli, this is not designing, but building a man!"

In 1779 Fuseli returned to England, and with the reputation of an eight years' residence in Rome upon him, he commenced his professional career as the painter of poetical subjects. Nature had endowed him eminently for this field, and the nation showed symptoms of an awakening regard for it. The enthusiasm for Milton, and especially Shakespeare, was warmer, and also more intelligent, than at any former time, and Fuseli was considered by himself and by many friends as destined to turn this state of feeling to excellent account. The first work which proved that an original mind had appeared in England was "The Nightmare," exhibited in 1782. "The extraordinary and peculiar genius which it displayed," says one of his biographers, "was universally felt, and perhaps no single picture ever made a greater impression in this country. A very fine mezzotinto engraving of it was scraped by Raphael Smith, and so popular did the print become that, although Mr. Fuseli received only twenty guineas for the picture, the publisher made five hundred by his speculation." His rising fame, his poetic feeling, his great knowledge, and his greater confidence, now induced Fuseli to commence an undertaking worthy of the highest

genius—the Shakespeare Gallery. An accidental conversation at the table of the nephew of Alderman Boydell started (it is said) the idea; and West and Romney, and Hayley and Fuseli shared in the honour. To the mind of the latter, indeed, such a scheme had been long present; it dawned on his fancy in Rome even as he lay on his back marvelling in the Sistine, and he saw in imagination a long and shadowy succession of pictures. Boydell supported the plan anxiously and effectually. On receiving £500 Reynolds entered, though with reluctance, into a scheme which consumed time and required much thought. But Fuseli had no rich commissions in his way—his heart was with the subject. In his own fancy he had already commenced the work, and the enthusiastic alderman found a more enthusiastic painter, who made no preliminary stipulations, but prepared his palette and began.

Fuseli's contributions to the Shakespeare Gallery were followed by others of a poetic order, all of which were marked by poetic freedom of thought, and by more than poetic extravagance of action. They astonished many whom they could not please, and the name of Fuseli was spread over the island and heard of in foreign lands. He was elected an Associate of the Academy in 1788, and early in 1790 became an Academician—honours won by talent without the slightest co-operation of intrigue.

In 1788 he married Sophia Rawlins, a young woman whom he first, it is said, employed as a model. She

Henry Fuseli *Hanfstaengl*

TITANIA AND BOTTOM

proved a kind and faithful wife, who soothed him in moments of irritation, loved him warmly, and worshipped his genius. She was handsome in youth, nor was she much faded when Opie painted her portrait. She was a woman of discretion, too, as well as of kindly feelings, and had what ladies call "trials." Not the least of these was when Mary Wollstonecraft cast bold eyes upon the "Shakespeare" of canvas, who, instead of repelling those ridiculous advances as they deserved, seems to have imagined himself possessed with the pure spirit of Platonic love, assumed the languid air of a sentimental Corydon, exhibited artificial raptures, and revived in imagination the faded fires of his youth. Though Mrs. Fuseli appears to have had little serious cause for jealousy, she regarded these philanderings with no easy mind. One day, when she seemed to be in a towering passion, "Sophia, my love," said her sarcastic husband, "why don't you swear? You don't know how much it would ease your mind!"

Fuseli sought refuge from the active affection of Miss Wollstonecraft in the absorbing studies of a new and gigantic undertaking—the Milton Gallery of paintings, commenced in 1790, completed in 1800, and containing in all forty-seven pictures from the works of the illustrious poet. In comparing these splendid fictions with living Nature, he was struck, he often said, with the lamentable deficiencies of the latter; yet conscious that by Nature he must be tried and judged, he was heard to exclaim in a fit of peevish-

ness: "Damn Nature!—she always puts me out." He had sometimes the curiosity to walk into the Milton Gallery after it was opened to the public, and as it was never very crowded, he could look at his works without much fear of interruption. One day a visitor accosted him, mistaking him for the keeper. "Those paintings, sir, are from 'Paradise Lost,' I hear, and 'Paradise Lost' was written by Milton. I have never read the poem, but I shall read it now." "I would not advise you, sir," said the sarcastic artist. "*You* will find it an exceedingly tough job." In the original sketch of the "Guardian Angels forsaking our First Parents after the Fall," they were represented rising on wings. He looked earnestly at his sketch, and exclaimed—for he generally thought aloud—"They *shall* rise without wings." He tried, and succeeded. Fuseli's illustrations of Shakespeare are not less clever than strange. They are full of poetical feeling, and more than poetical wildness. Nor was he much more sedate in the action of his designs when a graver work demanded his pencil. He furnished sketches for the Bible, published in sixpenny numbers, and joined Westall in illustrating a splendid edition of the New Testament. For the excellence of the work, take his own words. "We made pictures for the New Testament—there was only one good one among them all, and I suspect I painted it; but Westall may have the merit if he likes it, for it was not much." The *ci-devant* friend of Miss Wollstonecraft was no scoffer at revelation, nor would he suffer

any one in his presence to call it in question: he was in fact too full of feeling not to reverence his Bible, and he was at all times difficult to please with modern attempts to embody Scripture. When Northcote exhibited his "Judgment of Solomon," Fuseli looked at it with a sarcastic smirk on his face. "How do you like my picture?" inquired Northcote. "Much," was the answer—"the action suits the word—Solomon holds out his fingers like a pair of open scissors at the child, and says, 'Cut it'—I like it much!" Northcote remembered this when Fuseli exhibited a picture representing "Hercules drawing his Arrow at Pluto." "How do you like my picture?" inquired Fuseli. "Much," said Northcote—"it is clever, very clever, but he'll never hit him." "He shall hit him," exclaimed the other, "and that speedily." Away ran Fuseli with his brush, and as he laboured to give the arrow the true direction, was heard to mutter, "Hit him!—by Jupiter, but he shall hit him!"

Besides his affection for Shakespeare and Milton he had a great fondness for the wild mythology of the Scandinavians, and his "Thor battering the Serpent" was such a favourite that he presented it to the Royal Academy as his admission gift. The hurrying measures, the crowding epithets, and startling imagery of the northern poetry suited the intoxicated fancy of Fuseli. Such was his love of terrific subjects that he was known among his brethren by the name of *Painter in Ordinary to the Devil*, and he smiled when some

one officiously told him of this, and said, "Ay! he has sat to me many times." Once at Johnson the bookseller's table one of the guests said, "Mr. Fuseli, I have purchased a picture of yours." "Have you, sir; what is the subject?" "Subject? Really I don't know." "That's odd; you must be a strange fellow to buy a picture without knowing the subject." "I bought it, sir, that's enough—I don't know what the *devil* it is." "Perhaps it is the devil," replied Fuseli. "I have often painted him." On this one of the company, to arrest a conversation which was growing warm, said, "Fuseli, there is a member of your Academy who has strange looks, and he chooses as strange subjects as you do." "Sir," exclaimed Fuseli, "he paints nothing but thieves and murderers, and when he wants a model he looks in the glass."

On the death of Wilton the sculptor, Fuseli became Keeper of the Royal Academy. A by-law obliged him to resign the Professorship, which, however, he regained on the death of Opie, and thenceforth filled both situations with honour to himself and to the institution. The enthusiasm of his nature, the massy vigour of his language, and the sharp acidity of his wit were not wasted on empty walls—the lecture-room was commonly full. He was also, on the whole, liked as Keeper. It is true that he was often satiric and severe on the students, who found a constant source of amusement in his oddities, his jests, and the strong, biting wit which he had ever at their service. They are all fond of repeating his

jokes. He heard a violent altercation in the studio one day, and inquired the cause. "It is only those fellows the students, sir," said one of the porters. "Fellows!" exclaimed Fuseli; "I would have you to know, sir, that those *fellows* may one day become Academicians." The noise increased; he opened the door and burst in upon them, exclaiming, "You are a den of damned wild beasts, and I am your blasted keeper." The students laughed, and Fuseli retired smiling.

Once a student as he passed held up his drawing and said confidently, "Here, sir, I finished it without using a crumb of bread." "All the worse for your drawing," replied Fuseli; "buy a twopenny loaf and rub it out." He reserved a little of his wit and satire for his elder brethren of the easel and the modelling stool. He had aided Opie and Northcote in obtaining admission into the Academy, and when he proposed himself for Keeper naturally expected their assistance; they voted against him, and next morning went together to his house to offer an explanation. He saw them coming; he opened the door as they were scraping their shoes, and said, "Come in, come in; for the love of Heaven come in, else you will ruin me entirely."

"How so?" cried Opie.

"Marry this," replied the other, "my neighbours over the way will see you and say, 'Fuseli's *done*, for there's a bumbailiff (he looked at Opie) going to seize his person; and a little Jew-broker (he looked at

Northcote) going to take his furniture'—so come in, I tell you—come in!"

Fuseli spared no one. On Nollekens he was often very merciless; he disliked him for his close and parsimonious nature, and rarely failed to hit him under the fifth rib. Once at the table of Mr. Coutts the banker Mrs. Coutts, dressed like Morgiana [!], came dancing in, presenting her dagger at every breast; as she confronted the sculptor [Nollekens], Fuseli called out, "Strike—strike—there's no fear; Nolly was never known to bleed!"

With wit of this order, and willingness to let it be felt, he had nevertheless many friends. In dispute he was eager, fierce, unsparing, and frequently precipitated himself into angry discussions with the Council [of the Royal Academy], which, however, always ended in peace and good-humour, for he was as placable as passionate. On one occasion he flew into his own room in a storm of passion, and having cooled and come to himself, was desirous to return; the door was locked and the key gone; his fury overflowed all bounds. "Sam!" he shouted to the porter—"Sam Stowager, they have locked me in like a blasted wild beast; bring crowbars and open the door." The porter—a sagacious old man who knew the trim of the Keeper—whispered through the keyhole, "Feel in your pocket, sir, for the key!" He did so, and unlocking the door, with a loud laugh exclaimed, "What a fool; never mind, I'll to the Council, and soon show them they are greater asses than myself."

As a painter, his merits are of no common order. He was no timid and creeping adventurer in the region of art, but a man peculiarly bold and daring, who rejoiced only in the vast, the wild, and the wonderful, and loved to measure himself with any subject, whether in heaven above, the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth. The domestic and humble realities of life he considered unworthy of his pencil, and employed it only on those high or terrible themes where imagination may put forth all her strength and fancy scatter all her colours. He associated only with the demi-gods of verse, and roamed through Homer and Dante, and Shakespeare and Milton, in search of subjects worthy of his hand. He loved to grapple with whatever he thought too weighty for others; and assembling round him the dim shapes which imagination called readily forth, sat brooding over the chaos, and tried to bring the whole into order and beauty. He had splendid dreams, but, like those of Eve, they were sometimes disturbed by a demon, and passed away for ever before he could embody them.

Out of the seventy exhibited paintings on which he reposed his hope of fame, not one can be called commonplace—they are all poetical in their nature, and as poetically treated. Some twenty of these alarm, startle, and displease; twenty more may come within the limit of common comprehension; the third twenty are such as few men could produce, and deserve a place in the noblest collections; while the remaining ten are equal in conception to anything that genius has

hitherto produced, and second only in their execution to the true and recognised masterpieces of art.

It cannot be denied, however, that a certain air of extravagance, and a desire to stretch and strain, is visible in most of his works. A common mind, having no sympathy with his soaring, perceives his defects at once, and ranks him with the wild and unsober —a poetic mind will not allow the want of serenity and composure to extinguish the splendour of the conception; but whilst it notes the blemish, will feel the grandeur of the work. The approbation of high minds fixes the degree of fame to which genius of all degrees is entitled, and the name of Fuseli is safe.

CHAPTER XIII

JAMES BARRY

1741–1806

BARRY's first real step towards success was a picture which he painted in his native town of Cork when he was but nineteen years old (he was born in 1741) illustrating a tradition of the Irish Church concerning the Conversion of a King of Cashel by the eloquence of St. Patrick. The barbarian prince, when the apostle concluded his exhortation, called loudly to be baptized, and such was the hurry of the one and the fortitude of the other, that though the Saint, in planting his iron-shod crozier in the ground struck it unwittingly through the royal convert's foot, he uttered not one murmur, nor yet moved a muscle, but, conceiving it to be a part of the ceremony, stood and was baptized.

With this work in his hand, Barry went to Dublin and placed it among the paintings collecting for exhibition by the Society for the Encouragement of Arts. He was at this time utterly unfriended and unknown, coarsely clad, and with something of the stamp of enduring poverty upon him. The picture was exhibited and admired; but so little was such a work expected from a native artist, that, when the name

of the painter was demanded, and he stepped modestly forward, no one would believe him; his brow glowed, he burst into tears, and hurried out of the room.

All this was observed by Edmund Burke, one of the greatest and best-hearted of all the sons of genius. He sought out the young artist, commended and encouraged him, laid down the natural rules of composition, and directed his attention to what was pure and poetical. One of those incidents which biographers love to relate, and the world indulgently believes, is said to have happened at the very first interview between those two youthful adventurers. They had plunged into controversy in the first hour of their friendship, and Barry, in aid of his argument, quoted a passage from the "Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful," then published without the author's name. Burke refused to bow to the authority of a performance which he called slight and unsubstantial, and the fiery Barry exclaimed, "Do you call that a slight and unsubstantial work which is conceived in the spirit of nature and truth, is written with such elegance, and strewn all over with the richness of poetical fancy? I could not afford to buy the work, sir, and transcribed it every word with my own hand." Burke smiled, and acknowledged himself the author. "Are you, by God!" exclaimed Barry, embracing him, and holding out the copy which he had made of the work.

He continued some time in Dublin, and made less desirable friends than Burke, in whose company he

sometimes forgot himself. He was sensible of his folly however, and on his way home one night from a deep carouse determined on immediate amendment. This fit of repentance found him at the side of the Liffey; he stood and upbraided his own easiness of temper, and cursed the money in his pocket as a fiend that had tempted him to the tavern. He threw his purse into the river, ran home, and resumed his interrupted studies. In later life he related this to an outspoken friend. "Ah! Barry, man," said he, "you threw away your luck—you never had either gold or good temper to spare afterwards."

In his twenty-third year he went to London, and was introduced to Sir Joshua Reynolds. He had already determined to be an historical painter, and at Reynolds' advice and at Burke's expense he went to Rome to study, and remained there five years. Here he fell foul of the dilettanti and the picture-dealers, and his fiery and intractable nature got him into serious disrepute. "As to reports, my dear Barry," Burke wrote to him in 1769, "concerning your conduct and behaviour, you may be very sure they would have no kind of influence here; for none of us are of such a make as to trust to any one's report for the character of a person whom we ourselves know. Until very lately I have never heard anything of your proceedings from others; and when I did, it was much less than I had known from myself—that you had been upon ill terms with the artists and virtuosi of Rome, without much mention of cause or conse-

quence. . . . Depend upon it that you will find the same competitions, the same jealousies, the same arts and cabals, the emulations of interest and of fame, and the same agitations of passions here that you have experienced in Italy; and if they have the same effect on your temper, they will have just the same effects on your interest; and be your merit what it will, you will never be allowed to paint a picture. . . . That you had just subjects of indignation always, and of anger often, I do noways doubt; but who can live in the world without some trial of his patience? . . . Again and again, my dear Barry, we must be at peace with our species, if not for their sakes, yet very much for our own."

One story of Barry in Rome deserves recalling, if only to protest against its being taken as seriously as it sometimes has been—for instance, in J. T. Smith's "Nollekens and his Times," where it is thus related:—

"Barry, the historical painter, who was extremely intimate with Nollekens at Rome, took the liberty one night, when they were about to leave the English Coffee-house, to exchange hats with him. Barry's hat was edged with lace, and Nollekens' was a very shabby, plain one. Upon his returning the hat next morning, he was requested by Nollekens to let him know why he left him his gold-laced hat. 'Why, to tell you the truth, my dear Joey,' answered Barry, 'I fully expected assassination last night, and I was to have been known by my gold-laced hat.' This

villainous transaction, which might have proved fatal to Nollekens, I have often heard him relate, and he generally added, 'It's what the Old Bailey people would call a true bill against Jem.'"

On his arrival in England in 1773, he was warmly welcomed by Burke; and the first picture he exhibited—"Venus rising from the Sea"—was not unworthy of one who aspired to revive the faded lustre of historic painting. But this and other classical subjects were but coldly received, so he left Olympus and the bowers of Eden, and painted the "Death of Wolfe." While he was busy with this picture, the whisper spread that he had seen the error of his ways, and, in short, forsaken classical severity of character, and poetic freedom of costume, for the actual faces and dresses of the day. It was at length finished and exhibited. A combat of naked men astonished the multitude, who knew all the regiments engaged, and the cut of their regimentals. It was neither a poetic interpretation of the fight nor an historical illustration, but a sort of mixture of both, hastily conceived, and indifferently executed. Barry, who had shortly before been elected an Associate of the Royal Academy, was so much offended with the way in which this picture was hung or talked about by his brethren, that he never sent another work to their exhibition.

The ungainliness of his manners, the caustic sharpness of his remarks, and his sudden resentments repelled even those who were willing to help him. He

listened to the counsel of Burke with growing impatience, nor was he long in making even that friend of friends feel the fierceness of his nature. He had always professed a strong aversion to portait-painting; some ascribed this to envy of Reynolds, others to his own want of skill in that line of art; and Dr. Brocklesby, wishing to break the spell, requested Burke to sit to Barry. Barry agreed, but though Burke called repeatedly to commence the sittings, pre-engagements were pleaded, and a day's notice was demanded, and these airs of Barry's almost caused a rupture between the two friends. But Barry was ashamed of his obstinacy, and Burke relented towards one whom the world was not using according to his merits. The portrait which caused the angry *parle* was finished soon afterwards, and was considered a good likeness and a skilful work. In this lucrative line of art he might, no doubt, have obtained distinction if he could have surmounted his reluctance to becoming painter of the population at large, but his poetic feeling refused all sympathy with sordid looks and vulgar costume.

His next cabinet pictures—"Mercury inventing the Lyre," and "Narcissus admiring Himself in the Water"—were much admired among the imaginative. The latter owed its existence to a conversation with his illustrious friend during the sittings for his portrait. "On what works of fancy are you employed now?" said Burke. "On this little, slight thing," said Barry, holding up the picture; "it is

James Barry *Emery Walker*

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST

young Mercury inventing the lyre. The god, you know, found a tortoise shell at break of day on the seashore, and fashioned it into a fine instrument of music." "I know the story," replied Burke; "such were the fruits of early rising—he is an industrious deity, and an example to man. I will give you a companion to it, 'Narcissus wasting Time looking at Himself in the Fountain,' an image of idleness and vanity."

As early as 1777 a distinct change was noticeable both in the person and temper of Barry. He neglected his dress, lived sullenly and alone, and held intercourse with few of those men who influence the fame and fortune of artists. He seemed ever in a reverie, out of which he was unwilling to be roused. The history of his life is the tale of splendid works contemplated and seldom begun—of theories of art, exhibiting the confidence of genius and learning—and of a constant warfare waged against a coterie of connoisseurs, artists, and antiquarians, who ruled the realm of taste.

The high distinction which he claimed as follower of the grand style rendered it necessary, he imagined, that he should vindicate his title, and he determined to offer his pencil to the Society of Arts to adorn their great room (in the Adelphi) with a series of historical paintings. When he made this offer he had but sixteen shillings in his pocket, and was aware that, if it were accepted, he must have to steal time from sleep to supply him with the means of life.

"I thought myself bound," he says, "in duty to the country, to art, and to my own character, to try whether my abilities would enable me to exhibit the proof as well as the argument."

Even in those days there were many to smile at the absurdities of some parts of these six pictures, who could not feel the depth of mind which sought to unite them into one harmonious whole. To see the river Thames carried by Tritons, and Dr. Burney in the costume of 1778 playing a tune to Drake and Raleigh, excited laughter. "I am by no means pleased," said a Dowager, putting her fan before her face, "to see good Dr. Burney with a parcel of girls dabbling in a horse-pond." Barry then took up his pen to vindicate his work, and published a book, "which if you read," writes Dr. Johnson, "you will find decorated with some satirical strictures on Sir Joshua Reynolds and others. I have not escaped. You must think with some esteem of Barry for the comprehension of his design."

It was in 1797, however, that he published the famous letter to the Dilettanti Society, in which he embodied almost all his disputes with mankind collectively and individually. After describing the leading principles of national art—the objects which the Royal Academy had been instituted to accomplish, and the purposes to which their money, as well as their energies, ought to be directed—Barry plunged into the actual conduct of the Academy's affairs—denounced private combinations and jealousies—as-

serted that the funds were dissipated by secret intrigues—and as a finishing touch to the picture of weakness and corruption, proposed, seriously to all appearance, that whenever the judgment of the body was appealed to, the honest vote of each member should be secured by oath! On the appearance of this bitter diatribe the whole Academy, with the exception of Nollekens, declared war against Barry. They accused him of making digressions in his lectures, in which he abused members of their body, of teaching the students habits of insubordination and countenancing them in licentious and disorderly behaviour, of charging the Academy with voting in pensions among themselves £16,000 which should have been laid out for the benefit of the students, and finally of having spoken unhandsomely of the President, Benjamin West. With the haste of anger they proceeded to act on these charges, and Barry was degraded from his station of Professor of Painting, and expelled the Academy.

In his latter days Barry lived at 36 Castle Street, without even a servant. "Sir," he said to Burke who wished to come and dine with him, "you know I live alone; but if you will come and help me to eat a steak, I shall have it tender and hot, and from the most classic market in London—that of Oxford." On arriving, Burke was conducted by Barry into the painting room, which had undergone no change since it was a carpenter's shop. Most of the windows were broken or cracked, and the roof, which had no

ceiling, admitted the light through many crevices in the tiling, while two old chairs and a deal table were all the furniture. The fire was burning brightly, the steaks were put on to broil, and Barry, having spread a clean cloth on the table, put a pair of tongs in the hands of Burke, saying, "Be useful, my dear friend, and look to the steaks till I fetch the porter." Burke did as he was desired; the painter soon returned with the porter in his hand, exclaiming, "What a misfortune! the wind carried away the fine foaming top as I crossed Titchfield Street." They sat down together—the steak was tender and done to a moment—the artist was full of anecdote, and Burke often declared that he never spent a happier evening in his life.

Another account of him about this time is given by Southey. "I knew Barry," he wrote to Cunningham, "and have been admitted into his den in his worst, that is to say, his maddest, days, when he was employed upon the 'Pandora.' He wore at that time an old coat of green baize, but from which time had taken all the green that incrustations of paint and dirt had not covered. His wig was one which you might have supposed he had borrowed from a scarecrow; all round it there projected a fringe of his own grey hair. He lived alone in a house which was never cleaned, and he slept on a bedstead with no other furniture than a blanket nailed on the one side. I wanted him to visit me. No, he said; he could not go out by day, because he could not spare time from his great picture; and if he went out in the evening,

the Academicians would waylay him and murder him. In this solitary, sullen life he fell ill, very likely from want of food sufficiently nourishing, and after lying two or three days under his blanket, he had just strength enough left to crawl to his own door, open it, and lay himself down, with a paper in his hand, on which he had written his wish to be carried to the house of Mr. Carlyle in Soho Square. There he was taken care of, and the danger from which he had thus escaped seems to have cured his mental hallucination. . . . There is a story of his having refused to paint portraits, and saying, in answer to applications, that there was a man in Leicester Square who did it. But this, he said, was false; for that he would at any time have painted portraits, and have been glad to paint them."

Barry lived on till 1806, when he died of pleuritic fever. The Royal Academy had never proclaimed peace with him, and they now allowed his dust to remain unhonoured, but the Society of Arts permitted his body to be borne from the hall of the Adelphi which his genius had adorned; and Sir Robert Peel, who had benefited from his sudden death in the matter of an annuity, generously gave £200 to pay for his funeral and raise a tablet in St. Paul's to his memory.

CHAPTER XIV

JAMES NORTHCOTE

1746–1831

NORTHCOTE was the son of a small watchmaker in Plymouth, where he was born in the year 1746. His early desire to be distinguished as an artist arose from the fame of Reynolds, who was much talked about in Devonport, and his first attempts are said to have been portraits. He was sixteen years old, and irrevocably an artist, when Sir Joshua visited Devonport accompanied by Dr. Johnson. "I remember," Northcote said, "when he was pointed out to me at a public meeting, where a great crowd was assembled. I got as near to him as I could from the pressure of the people to touch the skirt of his coat, which I did with great satisfaction to my mind."

With the year 1771, the fortune of Northcote began to dawn. The friendship of Dr. John Mudge procured for him the notice of Reynolds, and though it would appear that Sir Joshua shook his head and shrugged his shoulders when he looked on his imperfect drawings and rude portraits, he was prevailed upon to admit him into his house as a student, and give him all the advantages of his gallery. He also studied at the Royal Academy, where, it is said, he

was quick in perceiving the defects of his fellow-students, and slow in remedying his own. The sharp admonitions which he received gave him a dislike to the Academy, and in after life he thus entered his testimony against it: "When the Royal Academy first began, one would have supposed that the members were so many angels sent from heaven to fill the different situations; now the difficulty is to find anybody fit for them; and deficiency is supplied by interest, intrigue, and cabal. Not that I object to the individuals, neither. As Swift said, I like Jack, Tom, and Harry very well by themselves, but all together they are not to be endured."

Of his studies under the eye of Sir Joshua, Northcote relates that, for the sake of practice, he painted the portrait of one of the female servants. The likeness was so strong that it was recognised by a large macaw, which Reynolds introduced in several of his pictures. The bird had no goodwill to the maid-servant, and the moment he saw the portrait he spread out his wings and ran in fury and bit at the face. Perceiving that he made no impression, he struck at the hand, and then looked behind, and lowering his wings walked off. "Sir Joshua observed," said Northcote, "that it was as extraordinary an instance as the old story of the bunch of grapes."

After serving his term of five years with Reynolds he returned to Plymouth for a short time, where he scraped enough money together by painting portraits to set out for Rome in 1777. On his return in 1780

he was warmly welcomed by Reynolds, who asked him what he thought of Michel Angelo, and what were his own views in life. "For once that I went to look at Raphael," replied Northcote, "I went twice to look at Michael; and, with respect to my own views, I am resolved to take a house and commence painting portrait and history." Sir Joshua praised his taste and also his resolution, and advised him to take a house in Leicester Fields, and set up his easel beside his old master. He contented himself, however, with humbler quarters at No. 2 Old Bond Street.

Northcote was at all times very accessible to flattery. Soon after his establishment in London, and when his pictures began to be talked of, a friend from Plymouth visited him, praised his works, and was going away.

"When shall we see you here again?" inquired the painter.

"When you are Sir James Northcote," replied the Devonian..

"Oh, that will never be," said the artist.

"Then there will be more want of discernment than of merit, sir," said the flatterer.

Upon this one present exclaimed, "You would not swallow that, would you?"

"Swallow!" said the painter; "why not? I will swallow anything that is sweet and pleasing."

The bitter things which dropt like aqua fortis from his tongue in after years made his early weaknesses remembered.

In 1783 Northcote began to exhibit, and new sitters being attracted, the way to his door began to be encumbered with carriages and servants holding saddle-horses, much in the manner which he himself relates of Opie. But though money began to pour in and fame to increase, the soul of the painter failed to expand with his fortune. He was, in truth, of a nature narrow and contracted. He maintained his early sharp system of economy, kept up the same simplicity of dress, and the same frugality of table. Nor did he bate one jot of his sarcastic remarks and bitter sayings.

To Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery, Northcote contributed his "Murder of the Royal Children," and was then desired by Boydell to try his hand on the "Death of Wat Tyler," which is his largest, if not his happiest, effort, and which met with a very gracious reception from the world. The citizens one and all applauded the performance. "Now Northcote will go home," said the sarcastic Fuseli, "put an extra piece of coal on his fire, and be almost tempted to draw the cork of his only pint of wine, when he hears such praise." This is what he said about the picture himself: "I said that I could make nothing of it; but as soon as Boydell was gone, and I was left to myself, the whole then seemed to unfold itself naturally. I never could study the rules of composition, or make sketches and drawings beforehand; in this, probably running into the opposite error to that of the modern Italian painters, whom Fuseli reproaches with spending their whole lives in preparation. I

must begin at once, or I can do nothing. When I set about 'Wat Tyler' I was frightened at it; it was the largest work I had ever undertaken; there were to be horses and armour and buildings, and several groups in it; when I looked at it the canvas seemed ready to fall on me. But I had committed myself, and could not escape; disgrace was behind me, and every step I made in advance was so much positively gained. If I had stayed to make a number of designs and try different experiments, I should never have had the courage to go on."

He took his seat in the Academy, but he seldom mixed up in any of those sharp debates which too frequently happened. He had no great liking for the Academy from the moment of his admission; of the members individually he expresses himself in his conversations with moderation, and sometimes kindness; but of the body corporate he writes with unmitigated bitterness. That he spoke little we have his own assurance. "I remember," he said, "when Sir Joshua wished to propose a monument to Dr. Johnson in St. Paul's, that West got up and said the King, he knew, was averse to anything of the kind, for he had been proposing a similar monument in Westminster Abbey for a man of the greatest genius and celebrity—one whose works were in all the cabinets of the curious throughout Europe—one whose name they would all hear with the greatest respect —and then it came out after a long preamble that he meant Woollett, who had engraved his 'Death

of Wolfe.' I was provoked, and could not help exclaiming, 'My God! do you put Woollett on a footing with such a man as Dr. Johnson, one of the greatest philosophers and moralists that ever lived? We can have a thousand engravers at any time.' There was such a burst of laughter at this; Dance, a grave, gentlemanly man, laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks; and Farington used afterwards to say to me, 'Why don't you speak in the Academy, and begin with "My God!" as you did when you discomforted West?'"

In 1791 Northcote removed to 39 Argyll Street, a house small but commodious. He was now in the forty-fourth year of his age, in the full enjoyment of health, with not a little money in the Funds, and a fame rather on the rise than the decrease; with fair employment as a portrait-painter, and now and then a small commission in the fancy or historic way. With the brethren of the easel, his sarcastic sayings and shrewd replies made him respected; a certain dislike which he had picked up or imbibed in matters of politics obtained him the notice of the Prince of Wales and the countenance of some of the Whig leaders, and it was supposed that he looked forward, and not without reason, to an accession of commissions on the death of Reynolds. The time of Sir Joshua's removal came, but men of greater skill in the popular art of portraiture had arisen, and Northcote saw with concern that public favour flowed to those who could flatter beauty with richer colours

than his own. He had other drawbacks, too, in the way of success as a portrait-painter. In the economy of his household he was sordid, and would not waste his money on silken accommodations for soft and fastidious customers. His sitting-room was ill furnished, ill arranged, and ill swept; and when a lady had overcome all her nicer sensations respecting the studio, she could not be sure that the occupier of the den might not treat her to some of his cynical sallies, and thus rob her face of much of that natural sweetness so essential in female portraiture.

Anecdotes of Northcote and his sitters are numerous. At the time when the young Roscius passed for a Garrick and a Kemble in one, he sat to our painter. That no honour might be wanting, he was conveyed by the Duke of Clarence (afterwards William IV.) to Argyll Place in his own carriage, where lords and ladies not a few usually assembled to see the progress of the work. The painter himself was, probably, to his Royal Highness not the least object of his curiosity. "The loose gown in which he painted," says one of his biographers, "was principally composed of shreds and patches, and might perchance be half a century old; his white hair was sparingly bestowed on each side, and his cranium was entirely bald. The royal visitor, standing behind him while he painted, first gently lifted, or rather twitched, the collar of the gown, which Northcote resented by suddenly turning and expressing his displeasure by a frown; on which his Royal Highness, touching

James Northcote *Emery Walker*

EDWARD PELLEW, VISCOUNT EXMOUTH

the professor's grey locks, said, 'You don't devote much time to the toilette, I perceive.' The painter instantly replied, 'Sir, I never allow any one to take personal liberties with me; you are the first who ever presumed to do so; and I beg your Royal Highness to recollect that I am in my own house.' The artist resumed his painting; the Prince stood silent for a minute or so, then opened the door, and went away. The royal carriage, however, had not arrived, and rain was falling; the Prince returned, borrowed an umbrella, and departed. 'Dear Mr. Northcote,' said one of the ladies, 'I fear you have offended his Royal Highness.' 'Madam,' said the painter, 'I am the offended party.' The next day, about noon, Mr. Northcote was alone, when a gentle tap was heard, the studio door opened, and in walked the Prince. 'Mr. Northcote,' he said, 'I am come to return your sister's umbrella; I brought it myself, that I might have an opportunity of saying that yesterday I thoughtlessly took an unbecoming liberty with you, which you properly resented. I really am angry with myself, and hope you will forgive me, and think no more of it.' 'And what did you say?' inquired a friend to whom the painter told the story. 'Say! Good God, what could I say? I only bowed—he might see what I felt. I could at that moment have sacrificed my life for him. Such a prince is worthy to be a king.' The Prince afterwards, in his maritime way, said, 'He's a damned honest, independent, little old fellow.'"

Northcote lived till 1831, and then died so calmly that he seemed to sleep life away. He was buried in the new church of St. Marylebone. "Talking with the painter," said Hazlitt, alluding to these last days, "is like conversing with the dead. You see a little old man of eighty years of age, pale and fragile, with eyes gleaming like the lights hung in tombs. He seems little better than a ghost, and hangs wavering and trembling on the very edge of life. You would think a breath would blow him away, and yet what fine things he says."

"Yes!" observed some one, "and what ill-natured things; they are malicious to the last word. He is a bottle of aqua fortis, which corrodes everything it touches."

"Except gold," said Hazlitt. "He never drops upon Sir Joshua or the great masters."

"Well, but is he not flowing over," persisted the other, "with envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness? He is as spiteful as a woman; and then his niggardliness. Did he ever give anything?"

"Yes, his advice," said Hazlitt, "and very unpleasant it is."

This is the picture of an ungracious sort of man, and yet Northcote was not without his mild and gentle moments; nay, he had them frequently. He was abstemious by nature; he had to carry on no warfare with passions wild and strong; and love of saving, and of long life, united to persuade him that one-half of mankind die in youth from intemperance. This

he not only believed himself, but his maiden sister believed it also; and as she had the furnishing of the table, she spread it so sparingly that visitors who accidentally dropped in at meal-time marvelled how they survived such continual self-denial.

The Prince of Wales, when he was a young man, met the painter, and was much pleased with his conversation. "What do you know of his Royal Highness?" inquired Sir Joshua. "Nothing," answered Northcote. "Nothing, sir! Why, he says he knows you very well." "Pooh!" said Northcote, "that's only his brag." The President smiled, and muttered, "Bravely said, bravely said."

CHAPTER XV

THOMAS ROWLANDSON

1756–1827

ALTHOUGH Rowlandson was widely known as an artist, few memorials of his career are extant. He was born in the Old Jewry in July 1756, just a year before his remarkable compeer, James Gillray. The members of the Rowlandson family seem to have been highly respectable middle-class folk. His father was a city merchant, a man of fair substance, but his disposition, like that of his son, seems to have been tinctured with recklessness, and before the boy had arrived at man's estate his chances of inheriting a provision to help him on his way, together with the prospect of any future support, so far as the paternal resources were concerned, had melted away. Nevertheless, owing to the partiality and indulgence of his aunt, a French lady who had married Thomas Rowlandson the elder, our artist was to a large degree the spoiled child of fortune throughout his early career.

From his tenderest years, it is recorded, Rowlandson gave presage of his future talent; he could make sketches before he learned to write, and when at school he spent his time scribbling caricatures of his master and schoolfellows, among whom was Henry Angelo,

author of the "Reminiscences," and son of the famous fencer of that name.

Rowlandson's genius was of the rapid order, and his powers were matured before the average of students have sounded the direction of their inclinations.

On leaving school he became a student in the Royal Academy Schools, where he appears to have given free rein to his animal spirits and mischievous instincts. He and his friend, John Bannister, were a great acquisition to the mirth of the schools, but both these eccentric geniuses must have sorely tried the patience of the authorities. When Richard Wilson held the appointment of Librarian to the Royal Academy, the students were accustomed to assemble in the library, and Rowlandson was apt to divert his fellow-students by his clever caricatures of the surly librarian, never forgetting to exaggerate his mulberry nose. But for one escapade he went near to getting himself expelled. He took a pea-shooter into the life school, and whilst old Moser, the Keeper, was adjusting the female model, and had just directed her contour, Rowlandson let fly a pea, which made the unfortunate girl start and throw herself out of position, besides interrupting the gravity of the class for the whole evening.

In his sixteenth year he went to complete his education in Paris, which in the latter days of Louis the Fifteenth's reign was a very Capua for a youth of light and picturesque disposition, but nevertheless his natural impulse for frivolity seems to have been kept in tolerable subjection, and the young artist did

a considerable quantity of solid work before he allowed himself to be whirled into the eddy of fashionable distractions. He joined one of the Parisian drawing-schools, and his natural abilities, aided by the excellence of the methods practised around him, enabled him to make rapid advances in the study of the human figure, and laid the foundation for his future success. During his first sojourn, which lasted for two years, Rowlandson learned to speak the language like a native. He became a perfect French buck, and occasionally, it is said, "permitted his satiric talents the indulgence of portraying the characteristics of that fantastic people, whose *outré* habits perhaps scarcely demanded the exaggerations of caricature!"

At nineteen he was again in Paris, still earnest and hard-working. Paris, as viewed under the old régime, opened a prolific source for his imitative powers, and nothing can exceed the fun and frolic which his subjects display, picked up among every class, from the Court down to the cabaret. He mixed in all societies, and speaking French fluently, made himself acquainted with the habits of thinking as well as those of acting in that city, where everything to an English eye bore the appearance of burlesque.

Hogarth had pronounced Paris "all begilt and befouled." Rowlandson found it so; and taking that as a sort of maxim which governed all things, physical as well as moral, in the polite city, he burlesqued even the burlesque.

His early bias was undoubtedly towards the simply

ludicrous. Then intervened his academic training in London and Paris, the maturing of his powers necessitating an immense and indeed almost incredible amount of sterling hard work, followed by an attempt towards his establishment as a serious artist and portrait-painter, and then a relapse in the direction of his early impulses. This inclination was fostered by the encouragement of his friends and the influence of their example. His cronies were, as was most natural, the humorous designers, the gifted Gillray, prince of caricaturists, Henry Wigstead and Henry Bunbury, the two latter men of social standing and fashion.

In 1775 Rowlandson exhibited at the Academy a drawing of "Delilah paying Samson a visit in Prison." A year or two afterwards he set up in Wardour Street as a portrait-painter, and contributed regularly to the Academy both portraits and landscapes. As a portrait-painter he would probably have made his mark, for his sense of feminine loveliness, of irresistible grace of face, expression, and attitude, was unequalled in its way, several of his female portraits having been mistaken for sketches by Gainsborough or Morland. It is cruel, as Grego says, to realise that Rowlandson, from sheer wantonness, promoted by the success of sundry caricatures shown in the Academy of 1784, neglected his opportunities in the direction of portraiture. It is the more exasperating, as successive Presidents of the Royal Academy—Reynolds, West, and Lawrence—pronounced their conviction that his abilities entitled him to rank with themselves, and that his genius would

reflect a lustre on the Academy if he exerted his talents in the recognised channels, and withstood the impulse to acquire notoriety by producing droll novelties.

In 1784 his fame and fortune seemed assured. But with every qualification to ensure success, he deliberately threw away the serious chances of life, and settled down as the delineator of the transitory impressions of the hour.

On the death of his aunt, to whom we have referred, Rowlandson came into a fortune of £7000, a quantity of plated trinkets, and other valuable property, which enabled him to indulge his predilections for a joyous life amid the gayest of the gay. He was known in London at many of the fashionable gaming houses, alternately won and lost without emotion, till at length he was minus several thousand pounds. He thus dissipated the amount of more than one valuable legacy, and it is said that he frequently played throughout a night and the next day, and that once, such was his infatuation for the dice, he continued at the gaming table nearly thirty-six hours!

This uncontrollable passion for gambling, strange to say, did not pervert his principles. He was scrupulously upright in all his financial transactions, and ever avoided getting into debt. After having lost all he possessed, he would return to his studio, and sit down coolly to produce a series of new designs, exclaiming with stoical philosophy: "I have played the

Thomas Rowlandson *R. Gutekunst, Esq.*

THE WEDDING

fool, but," holding up his pencils or reed pen with which he traced his flowing outlines, "here is my resource."

Rowlandson was once knocked down and robbed of his watch and money as he was walking home near midnight. The next day he repaired with his friend Angelo to Seven Dials and other low haunts, hoping to recognise the ruffian, but to no purpose. The next night a gentleman was robbed in Soho Square in like manner. Soon afterwards several suspicious characters were taken to an office then in Litchfield Street, suspected of street robberies, and Rowlandson went there out of curiosity, accompanied by many others who had been robbed, but he failed to identify his man. One of the rogues, thinking himself secure, insolently defied Rowlandson to say he had ever robbed him. "No," replied the artist, "but you are very like the description of the ruffian who robbed a gentleman last night in Soho Square." Probably a random shot, but it went home. The villain paled, and was afterwards identified by the gentleman he had attacked. He was tried, found guilty of robbery, and hanged. This pleased Rowlandson mightily, "for though I got knocked down," said he, "and lost my watch and money, and did not find the thief, I have been the means of hanging *one* man. Come, that's doing something."

When Rowlandson was touring in France, his mighty stature, as Angelo tells us, so astonished the innkeepers' wives, that on his arrival they would look

at the larder, and then again at the guest. All regarded him as that reported being of whom they had heard, the veritable John Bull. His orders for the supplies of the table, ever his first concern, strengthened this opinion, and his operations at his meals confirmed the fact. Wherever he went, he made good for the house.

At one time he devoted himself to book illustration, and did a series of plates to illustrate works by Goldsmith, Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, and many other humorists of that day. Possibly his most popular series was a group of designs issued monthly, for which William Combe, then in a debtors' prison, without any acquaintance with the artist, wrote the humorous poem, "Dr. Syntax in Search of the Picturesque."

Rowlandson married in 1800 a Miss Street of Camberwell, but, as far as we know, had no children. He died in London after a long illness in 1827.

No artist of the past or present school, perhaps, ever expressed so much as Rowlandson with so little effort, or with so evident an appearance of the absence of labour. His designs were usually executed in outline with the reed pen, and then delicately washed with colour. Afterwards this was etched on copper, then aquatinted—usually by a professional engraver—the impressions being finally coloured by hand. As a designer, he was characterised by the utmost facility and ease of draughtsmanship. But his art suffered from haste and over-production. His most artistic work is

to be found among the more careful drawings of his earlier period, but even among the gross forms and exaggerated caricatures of his later time we find here and there in the graceful lines of a figure or the sweet features of some maiden's face, sufficient hints that this master of the humorous might have attained to the beautiful had he so willed.

His drawings include every form of life, high and low—the tavern, the town, the village, Parliament, masquerades—and though in some measure they rank as caricatures, they are nevertheless studies from life, keenly observed and sharply executed. But the subjects which specially appealed to his pen were the denizens of the squalid quarters of London. "The cry of misery rising from the pavement of great cities," says Muther, "had been first heard by Rowlandson, and the pages on which he drew the poor of London are a living dance of death of the most ghastly veracity."

CHAPTER XVI

SIR HENRY RAEBURN

1756–1823

SIR HENRY RAEBURN was born at Stockbridge, a suburb of Edinburgh, on March 4, 1756. His ancestors lived on the border, and were husbandmen in peace and soldiers in war, till the reign of disorder ended with the union of the Crowns, upon which they laid aside the helmet and sword and peacefully cultivated the ground during succeeding generations. One of their descendants, Robert Raeburn, removed to Stockbridge, set up a factory, and became the proprietor of mills. He married Ann Elder, and had two sons, William and Henry.

When only six years old Henry was unhappily deprived of both parents. But William, then a lad of eighteen, took over the management of the mills, and, as far as he was able, supplied a father's place to his younger brother. Through the influence of friends Henry was placed at "Heriot's Wark," the Christ's School of Edinburgh, where he obtained a sound education, which enabled him to maintain without reproach an intercourse of letters with some of the first literary men of the age; and, furthermore, his manners had been so well cared for that he was never

found wanting in the gentlemanly decorum and politeness which is not only becoming, but necessary in a portrait-painter. Raeburn attributed many of the best friendships of his manhood to the intimacies formed with boys at school. His nature was open and sincere; and though his temper was quick and warm, it had that quality in it which never estranged friends, nor permanently offended any one.

At the age of fifteen he left school, and was bound apprentice to a goldsmith. In his spare time he amused himself by making caricatures of his companions. But the use of his pencil as a pastime gradually assumed a more serious form, and we find him painting miniatures of all who chose to give their time to sit. His master, one Gilliland, was struck by these youthful attempts, and to give him the advantage of examples, took him to see the pictures of David Martin, a popular portrait-painter of the day, who received the young aspirant courteously, and whose condescension and works so delighted and astonished Raeburn, that in later life he used to say, when his own name was deservedly high, that the kind words of Martin were still in his ears, and his paintings before his eyes. Undoubtedly Raeburn reaped great benefit from this visit. He was inspired to attempt a freer style, and touched his miniatures with a bolder hand. Owing to the kind indulgence of his master, who not only allowed him much of his time for painting, but also introduced sitters, he generally painted two portraits in a week, and as these were

commissions, money came pouring in. So much had art now become the fixed purpose of his life, that he made an arrangement with his master to have all his time to himself, on the payment of a certain sum for the remainder of his apprenticeship.

He took a studio and began to try sketches in oils, and very soon succeeding far better than he thought possible with so little experience, he started working in the life-size. Many elementary difficulties he had to contend with unaided—the preparation of his colours, the placing them on the palette and applying them according to the rules of art as taught in the Academies. Martin assisted him to the extent of lending him pictures with permission to copy them; but the elder artist felt some sort of presentiment that the youth who seemed so disposed to worship his works would, in no distant day, eclipse them; so he limited his help to the act of lending, and refused all explanation of the way in which a picture, from a mere outline in chalk, becomes a finished performance in oil. Raeburn soon was forced to give up this slight assistance, as Martin unjustly accused him of selling one of the copies which he had permitted him to make; and though the youthful painter indignantly asserted and established his innocence, he refused all further accommodation from a patron so captious. The name of Raeburn now began to be heard of in his native city; commissions for miniatures multiplied upon him, and life-size portraits in oils were not neglected; and so much did his powers expand with space, that

the latter soon outrivalled the former, and grew so much in request that he resolved to relinquish miniature painting entirely and abide by the easel. It is remarkable that from the first none of the same, nice, trembling littlenesses of the miniature style could be traced in his oil pictures: all was broad, massy, and vigorous.

Though Raeburn had no desire to forsake the line of portraiture, he loved to make himself acquainted with what was fair in landscape. He frequently made excursions, sketch-book in hand, and noted down fine snatches of scenery. The story goes that on one of these occasions he met the lady who afterwards became his wife. He introduced her into one of his landscape sketches, and when she presented herself at his studio shortly afterwards and desired to sit for her portrait, he instantly recognised her. On further acquaintance he found that, besides personal charms, she had sensibility and wit. This lady was the Countess Leslie, widow of James Leslie of Balquhun, a Scottish gentleman with a foreign title, and so pleased was the Countess with the skill and address of the artist that, in a month of the completion of her portrait, she gave him her hand in marriage. Thus, at the age of twenty-two, Raeburn found himself with an affectionate and richly-dowered wife, twelve years his senior, and two stepdaughters. Truly a charming romance! But, alas! the evidence connecting the lady he met when sketching with his titled sitter and future wife is of the slenderest.

During the first years of his married life the artist executed many commissions; his fame spread beyond Edinburgh, and he was looked upon as one whom genius and fortune had united to raise. His profession was yielding him an income more than equal to his wants; but he recognised that lasting fame was not to be gained by such imperfect skill as his, and, money difficulties now being at an end, he resolved to improve himself by studying the best models. For this purpose he went to London, where he was introduced to Sir Joshua Reynolds, and gained at once, it is said, the favour and friendship of the most discerning and cautious of men. Some one, from this circumstance, has called him the disciple of Sir Joshua, but he never had the honour nor the advantage of studying under him; and indeed, if he had been admitted to paint in his studio, such was the care with which the President guarded the golden mysteries of his art, that Raeburn would have gained nothing save what his own eyes could glean.

Sir Joshua counselled him to study at Rome and worship Michel Angelo in the Sistine Chapel, and when they were about to separate said, "Young man, I know nothing about your circumstances; young painters are seldom rich; but if money be necessary for your studies abroad, say so, and you shall not want it." This generous offer Raeburn declined with due thanks, but gladly accepting letters of introduction to the most eminent artists in Rome, took his departure for Italy. The advantages of two years' study in

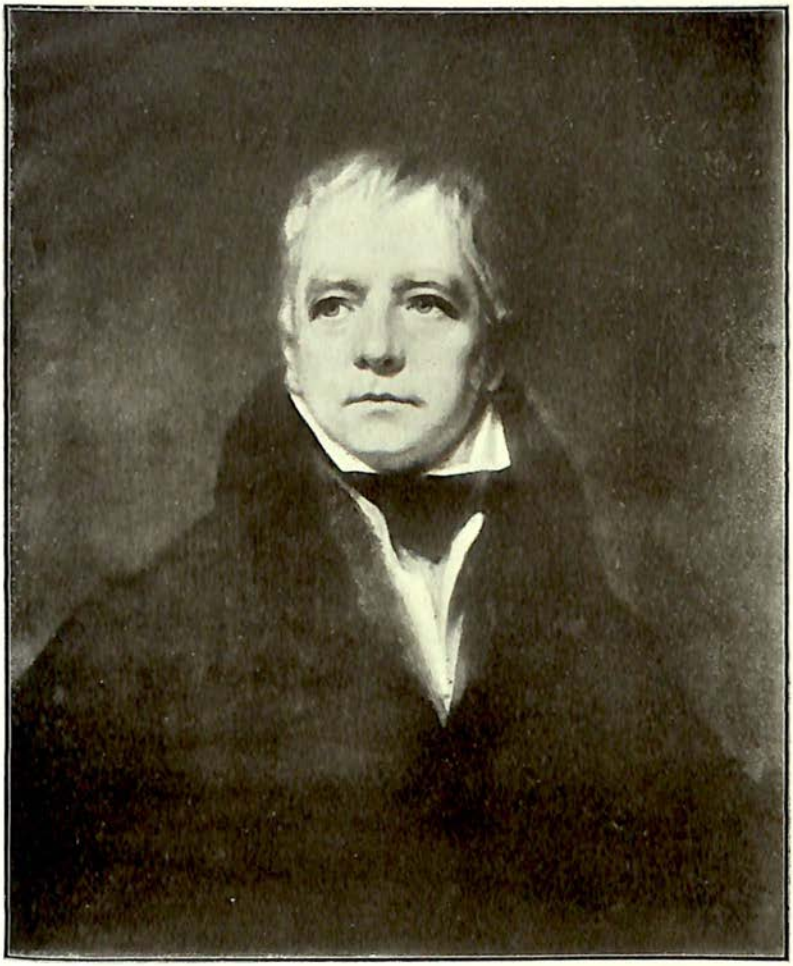
Rome, and the sight of so many noble works of art, made visible improvements in his work, and in 1787 he returned to Edinburgh and set up his easel in George Street.

For many years he had not fewer than three or four sitters a day. To these he gave an hour and a half each, and for a head required four or five sittings. He preferred painting the head and hands to any other part of the body. A fold of drapery caused him more perplexing study than a head full of thought and imagination. Such was the intuition with which he penetrated at once to the mind, that the first sitting rarely came to a close without his having seized strongly on the character and disposition of the individual. He never drew in his heads, or indeed any part of the body, with chalk, but began with the brush at once. The forehead, chin, nose, and mouth were his first touches. He always painted standing, and never used a stick to steady his hand. From one who sat to him we have the following description of his way of going to work. "He spoke a few words to me in his usual brief and kindly way—evidently to put me in an agreeable mood; and then having placed me in a chair on a platform at the end of his painting room, in the posture required, set up his easel beside me with the canvas ready to receive the colour. When he saw all was right, he took his palette and his brush, retreated back step by step, with his face towards me, till he was nigh the other end of his room; he stood and studied for a minute more, then came up to the

canvas, and without looking at me wrought upon it with colour for some time. Having done this, he retreated in the same manner, studied up looks at that distance for about another minute, then came hastily up to the canvas and painted a few minutes more."

As time went on Raeburn found he needed more accommodation than he had in George Street, so he decided to build a more spacious house in York Place. Architecture had been for some time a favourite study, and with great success he planned and built his new gallery, and took possession of it in 1795.

In the following years many of the distinguished literary and scientific men then living in Edinburgh sat to Raeburn. Though they fully appreciated his talent for portraiture, they did not always approve of his backgrounds. Morrison records an occasion when Sir Walter Scott tackled the artist on this subject. "I wish," said Sir Walter, "that you would let us have a little more finishing in the backgrounds. Sir Thomas Lawrence, I understand, employs a landscape painter." "Of that I do not approve," said the artist. "Landscape in the background of a portrait ought to be nothing more than the shadow of a landscape; effect is all that is wanted. Nothing ought to divert the eye from the principal object—the face. . . . I am at present painting an Admiral, and had some thoughts of asking my friend, the minister of Duddingston, to paint me a sea; but, on second thoughts, I am afraid that Mr. Thomson's sea might put my part of the picture to the blush."



Sir Henry Raeburn *Annan & Sons*

SIR WALTER SCOTT

The same opinion seems to have been held by Raeburn's London friends, as we see in a letter on the same subject from one of his well-wishers. "I congratulate you," he writes, "on the great improvements which you have made in the backgrounds. . . . Your pictures are now altogether beautiful. There is no beautiful head and finely-executed figure ruined by a systematic background; everything is in harmony, and your subject has fair-play. . . . I suppose there is no more Prussian blue to be had in Scotland, and all your Naples yellow is used up; or perhaps the climate of Edinburgh is altered for the better. I beg you to pardon this forwardness; I have ever felt a great interest in your reputation, and been much mortified when, year after year, you persisted in a manner that was so disadvantageous to your fame. Pursue your *present plan*, and your immortality is certain."

He had now attained the age of fifty-eight; his pictures had borne his name far and wide; his family, of whom he had both sons and daughters, had grown up around him; and he lived on terms of intimacy or friendship with many of the first men of the age. No Academy, either in England or foreign parts, however, had yet admitted him as a member. In discussing his chances of election to the Royal Academy, he writes to a friend in 1814: "I observe what you say respecting the election of an R.A.; but what am I to do here? They know I am on their list; if they choose to elect me without solicitation, it will be the

more honourable to me, and I will think the more of it; but if it can only be obtained by means of solicitation or canvassing, I must give up all hope of it, for I would think it unfair to employ those means." In the same year he sent four pictures to the exhibition at Somerset House. These included portraits of Lord Seaforth and Sir David Baird, both works of a high order. What impression these two masterly portraits made it is difficult to say, but before 1814 closed Raeburn was elected an Associate, and in the succeeding year a Royal Academician. Other honours of the same nature now awaited him. He was made a member of the Imperial Academy of Florence, and an honorary member of the Fine Arts at New York and of the Academy of Arts in South Carolina.

The academic honours which he had obtained appear to have extended his already ample practice, and from that time his portraits of the rank and fashion of Scotland were regularly seen at the exhibitions of the Royal Academy. The notice which they obtained, and the feeling that the metropolis was the proper field for a man of genius, induced Raeburn, thus late in life, to think of establishing himself in London. On this delicate point he consulted Sir Thomas Lawrence. It is not known by what train of reasoning Lawrence succeeded in persuading his fellow-labourer in portraiture to content himself with his Scottish practice, and though Raeburn never expressly said it, he sometimes seemed to insinuate, in conversations at his own fireside, that the President of the Royal

Academy had been no loser by his absence from the field of competition.

The autumn of 1822 brought King George IV. to Scotland, and to Raeburn the honour of a knighthood, which, in the opinion of all who loved the arts, had never been more worthily bestowed. In the following May the King appointed him his "limner and painter in Scotland, with all fees, profits, salaries, rights, privileges, and advantages thereto belonging." But the artist did not live long to enjoy these privileges, for on the very day the nomination was announced he became ill, and he died on July 8, 1823, in his sixty-eighth year.

The character of Raeburn appears to have been every way unblemished; he was a candid, honest man, ever ready to aid merit, and give a helping hand to genius in art. Through life he discharged, with blameless attention, all the duties of a good citizen. His pencil never kept him from his place in church on Sunday, and in the days of trouble he was a zealous Volunteer. His tall, handsome figure and fine, open, manly countenance will not be forgotten for many a day in "the place which knew him."

CHAPTER XVII

JOHN HOPPNER

1759–1810

THERE is a mystery about John Hoppner's birth which probably will never be explained. All that is known with certainty is, that he was born in April 1759 in Whitechapel, and that his mother was one of the German attendants at the Royal Palace. According to the inscription on her tombstone, she was "the widow of John Hoppner, surgeon." No one, however, has suggested that John Hoppner, surgeon, was the father of the artist. The King, according to Allan Cunningham, caused the child to be carefully nursed and well educated, and when he grew up, as his voice was sweet and melodious, he was made one of the choristers in the Royal Chapel. The general opinion of his contemporaries—an opinion which Hoppner himself never contradicted—was that he was a natural son of King George III. As a writer in the *Art Journal* for 1891 expressed it, 'He bore his mother's name, and in his childhood toddled about the passages and corridors of St. James's Palace, where he was looked upon as a little chance person."

There is no doubt that, when Hoppner grew up, he was willing enough to have it understood that

he owed something more than his nursing and education to the throne. Possibly this was the mere ruse of a shrewd man, who felt how much such a surmise would help his fortune; but it received some sort of countenance from the very active patronage of the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV., who supported him against the rising fame of Lawrence and Owen, and the settled reputation of Opie, and crowded his studio with princes, peers, and fine ladies. Of the boyish studies of Hoppner little is known. He apparently entered the Academy Schools when he was sixteen years old, and ascended slowly and systematically through all the steps required, till, with paint on his palette and a brush in his hand, he contended for the highest prizes of the institution. With such success did he study, and so fortunate was he in his sketches and his early attempts, that before his twenty-fourth year he was looked upon as one likely to become great in landscape, and who already painted heads in a way worthy of a more established name. As soon as it was safe as a matter of taste to befriend him he found patrons, and powerful ones, amongst others Mrs. Jordan. Then followed the portraits of the Duke and Duchess of York, of the Prince of Wales, and the Duke of Clarence, afterwards William IV., with ladies of quality and noblemen not a few, and gentlemen without number. "A Sleeping Venus," a "Belisarius," "Youth and Age," and other productions, half-natural and half-ideal, belong to his early days, and in 1780 he exhibited

for the first time at the Royal Academy, which had just moved to its new quarters in Somerset House.

His marriage took place in 1782, when he was twenty-three, to the beautiful Phœbe Wright. Phœbe was a favourite model of several painters, including Benjamin West, and in all probability she sat for Hoppner's "Primrose Girl."

Before his thirtieth year he was securely established in the popular favour, in spite of the rivalry of his great competitors Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Romney. As his colouring was rich and his style of portraiture captivating to the vain side of human nature, it is not surprising that his commissions increased in number. The light of the Prince of Wales' countenance was of itself sufficient to guide the courtly and beautiful to his easel.

In 1785 Reynolds had been appointed Painter-in-Ordinary to the King, in succession to Allan Ramsay, rather as a grudging concession to popular opinion than as a mark of royal appreciation, for Hoppner was the real favourite at Court. In that year Hoppner painted the three daughters of the King, but shortly afterwards he seems to have forfeited the goodwill of his Majesty, a misfortune due, according to Samuel Rogers, to the ill offices of Benjamin West, but more probably to the growing intimacy of the artist with the Prince of Wales. In order to conceal the matter from his wife, Hoppner would sometimes secretly pocket a roll, leave his house for the day, and on his return pretend that he had been dining at Windsor.

By this time, however, another Court star had arisen, destined to outshine that of Hoppner, though some called it a meteor that would but flash and disappear. It was in 1787 that Thomas Lawrence made his first appearance on the walls of the Academy with seven portraits. Urged upon the Academy by the King and Queen, this new aspirant—he was ten years younger than Hoppner—rose rapidly in the estimation of the public. By the most delicate flattery, both with tongue and pencil, he became a formidable rival to the painter whom it was the Prince's pleasure to befriend. The factions of Reynolds and Romney seemed revived in those of Hoppner and Lawrence. If Hoppner resided in Charles Street at the gates of Carlton House, and wrote himself "Portrait-Painter to the Prince of Wales," Lawrence likewise had his residence in the Court end of the town, and proudly styled himself, and that when only twenty-three years old, "Portrait-Painter-in-Ordinary to His Majesty." In other respects, too, were honours equally balanced between them: they were both made Royal Academicians, but in this, youth had the start of age—Lawrence obtained that honour first. Nature, too, had been kind—some have said prodigal—to both; they were men of fine address, and polished by early intercourse with the world, and, by their trade of portrait-painting, could practise all the delicate courtesies of drawing-room and boudoir, but in that most fascinating of all flattery, the art of persuading with brushes and fine colours very ordinary mortals that

beauty and fine expression were their portions, Lawrence was soon without a rival. The preference of the King and Queen was for a time balanced by the affection of the Prince of Wales. The latter was supposed to have the best taste, and as he kept a Court of his own, filled with young nobility and all the wits of the Whig faction, Hoppner had the youth and beauty of the land; and it cannot be denied that he was a rival every way worthy of contending with any portrait-painter of his day.

In 1797 Hoppner was in the zenith of his powers. He had thirteen pictures at the Royal Academy, and these included some of his finest work, though according to a venomous contemporary critic, Pasquin, whom Macaulay stigmatised as "a malignant and filthy baboon," his portrait of the Duke of Bedford was like "a lounging pick-pocket!" The same critic also speaks of "the absurd and unqualified praises which have been given in various journals to Mr. Hoppner," and ranks Beechey and Lawrence as far ahead of Hoppner in point of merit. But Gifford, another contemporary critic, took a juster view when he wrote—

> One Sun is set, one glorious sun, whose rays
> Long gladdened Britain with no common blaze:
> Oh, mayest thou soon (for clouds begin to rise)
> Assert his station in the Eastern skies,
> Glow with his fires, and give the world to see,
> Another Reynolds risen, my friend, in thee!

The rivalry of the Court painters continued for a while in the spirit of moderation. Lawrence, the

gentler and smoother of the two, kept silence longest; the warm nature of Hoppner broke out at last. "The ladies of Lawrence," said he, "show a gaudy dissoluteness of taste, and sometimes trespass on moral as well as professional chastity." For his own he claimed, by implication, purity of look as well as purity of style. This sarcastic remark found wings in a moment, and flew through all coteries and through both Courts. All men laughed, but, according to Allan Cunningham, Hoppner's observation harmed only himself. "The ladies," writes Cunningham, "from the moment of the sarcasm of Hoppner, instead of crowding to the easel of him who dealt in the loveliness of virtue, showed a growing preference for the rival who trespassed 'on moral as well as professional chastity.'" If we are to judge from the Academy lists alone, it would seem that this statement lacks accuracy, for about this period Lawrence exhibited fewer portraits than his rival, and probably the bad times through which the nation was passing, and not Hoppner's injudicious remark, caused the falling off in the number of his fair sitters.

Those who consider Hoppner as a limner of men and women's heads, who dashed them off at a few sittings, pocketed the price, replenished his palette, and prepared himself for any new comer, do his memory injustice. He was a fine, free-spirited, manly fellow, overflowing with wit and humour, inconsiderate in speech, open-hearted, and as well acquainted with the poetry and history of his native country as

the most gifted of her sons. His conversational powers were famous, and in the company of the learned not less than among the gay and the noble of that day he was easy and unembarrassed. Amongst his brethren of the easel he was still more at home, and made himself welcome by his ready wit and various knowledge.

Once he and Edridge and two other artists went into the country and quartered themselves at an inn where the ale was good. As a fair was held in the neighbourhood, they walked out about sunset and mingled in the crowd when the fun and frolic began. Hoppner was in merry mood. "You have always," he said to his friends, "seen me in good company and playing the courtier, and in fine took me for a damned well-bred fellow and genteel withal. A mistake, I assure you. I love low company, and am a bit of a ready-made blackguard. See!" He gave his coat a queer pull, his neckcloth a twitch, knocked his hat awry, and putting on a face of indescribable devilry, started into the midst of a mob of reeling rustics, and in a moment was "hail fellow, well met" with the wildest of them. But rough gambols and homespun wit seemed not enough for his new character. He edged himself into a quarrel with a brawny waggoner, and had a capital set-to with the fists, in which the latter, though a powerful boor and withal a practised boxer, was roughly handled. He gave his antagonist half a guinea, set his hat and neckcloth right, and retired amid the applause of the crowd.

Hoppner was one of many artists who imagine

John Hoppner *Sir Edward Tennant, Bart.*

THE SISTERS

they behold in the high prices and ready sale of the works of the great Italian masters a settled prejudice on the part of the public against all works of living men or of modern times. He used to say when he looked upon a fine work of his own day, "Ay, it is a noble picture; but it has one damning defect, it is a *modern* one. Prove it, sir, to be but two hundred years old, and from the brush of a famous man, and here's two thousand guineas for it."

The artist's popularity as a portrait-painter was gained no doubt partly by his success in making the best of his sitters. According to Gifford, "in his constant wish to represent the gentleman, he sometimes failed to delineate the man." Northcote, too, tells us that Hoppner in painting ladies' portraits used to make as beautiful a face as he could, then give it a likeness to the sitter, working down from this beautiful state until the bystanders saw a likeness coming. The artist then stopped, and never ventured to make the resemblance more complete. But these criticisms cannot be regarded seriously, since it is obvious from so many of his portraits that the great painter aimed at the delineation of character rather than superficial prettiness.

Another anecdote related by Northcote is worth recording. "I once went with Hoppner," said Northcote, "to the meetings to vote for Horne Tooke; and when they asked me what I was, I said, 'A painter.' At this Hoppner was very mad all the way home, and said, I should have called myself a

portrait-painter. I replied, the world had no time to trouble their heads about such distinctions."

In 1806 Hoppner exhibited his "Sleeping Nymph," a picture remarkable for the "vivacity, truth, and delicacy of the various fleshy tints," and one of the chief ornaments of the Tabley collection. The likeness of the nymph is supposed to be that of Miss Cottin, afterwards Lady De Tabley. On the death of her husband the picture was sold, possibly, as Mr. Skipton says in his "Life of Hoppner," because Lady De Tabley, who afterwards married a clerical relative, disliked the idea of going down to posterity in such a very *négligé* attire.

Among other portraits exhibited by Hoppner in the Academy of 1807 was one named "A Lady of Quality." This is said to be the famous picture of Lady Louisa Manners, which a few years ago realised the record price of 14,050 guineas at a public auction.

Ill-health, which began to trouble Hoppner in 1801, gradually increased, and in 1809 he had a dangerous seizure at Ryde, from which he never really recovered. The following year he sent nothing to the Academy, and it soon became apparent that he had not long to live. During his last days Lawrence went repeatedly to inquire after him, but Hoppner, it is said, saw in such visits more of joy at his approaching death than of true sympathy. But this was doubtless unjust to Lawrence, who amidst too much of the silken show of courtesy was naturally kind-hearted and generous. "You will be sorry," wrote Lawrence to a friend,

"to hear that my most powerful competitor, he whom, only to my friends, I have acknowledged as my rival, is, I fear, sinking into the grave—I mean, of course, Hoppner. . . . You will believe that I sincerely feel the loss of a brother-artist from whose works I have often gained instruction, and who has gone by my side in the race these eighteen years." The end came on the 23rd of January 1810, and Hoppner was buried in the cemetery of St. James's Chapel, Tottenham Court Road.

CHAPTER XVIII

JOHN OPIE

1761–1807

OPIE was born at St. Agnes, near Truro, in Cornwall, in 1761. His father and grandfather were carpenters, and he ought to have been one too; but he appears to have disliked the business, since his father had to chastise him for making ludicrous drawings with red chalk on the deals which were planed up for use. Some of his sketches attracted the notice of Dr. Wolcot (Peter Pindar), who was then residing at Truro, and it is said that he took him as a lad to clean knives, feed the dog, &c., purposely to screen him from the beating his father would now and then give him for chalking the saw-pit all over.

When still very young he began portrait-painting professionally, wandering from town to town in search of employment. "One of these expeditions," says Prince Hoare, "was to Padstow, whither he set forward, dressed as usual in a boy's plain short jacket, and carrying with him all proper apparatus for portrait-painting. Here, among others, he painted the whole household of the ancient and respectable family of Prideaux, even to the dogs and cats of the family. He remained so long absent from

home, that some uneasiness began to arise on his account, but it was dissipated on his returning dressed in a handsome coat, with very long skirts, laced ruffles, and silk stockings. On seeing his mother he ran to her, and taking out of his pocket twenty guineas which he had earned by his pencil, he desired her to keep them, adding that in future he should maintain himself."

Of those early efforts, good judges have spoken with much approbation; they were deficient in grace, but true to nature, and remarkable for their fidelity of resemblance. Lord Bateman was one of his earliest patrons, and employed him to paint old men and travelling mendicants; sitters such as these neither alarmed the rustic artist with their dignity, nor annoyed him with their remarks—they sat in silent wonder, and beheld the second creation of their persons, then rose and thought him a wondrous lad. By this practice his hand attained that ready and dashing freedom of manner which was so much his friend when more fastidious heads came to his easel. His usual price when he was sixteen years of age was seven shillings and sixpence for a portrait. But of all the works which he painted in those probationary days, that which won the admiration of the good people of Truro most was a parrot walking down his perch; all the living parrots that saw it acknowledged the resemblance.

So much was he charmed with his pursuits and his prospects, that when Wolcot asked him how he liked

painting, "Better," he answered, "than bread and meat," and before he was twenty years old accompanied the Doctor to London, and was presented to Sir Joshua Reynolds. The President received him courteously, gave him some advice, and desired to see him again. He evidently did not consider this new marvel at all marvellous.

To rise by silent and slow degrees to fame suited ill with the rustic impatience of Opie, and worse with the vanity of Peter Pindar, who desired to amaze the town by proclaiming a prodigy, and who for once was right; he took his measures accordingly, and the wealthy and titled hordes, who possessed taste and *virtù*, and were absolute in art and literature, came swarming out to behold "The Cornish Wonder," as the patron announced the painter.

Of the success of this manœuvre Northcote gives this graphic account: "The novelty and originality of manner in his pictures, added to his great abilities, drew an universal attention from the connoisseurs, and he was immediately surrounded and employed by all the principal nobility of England. When he ceased, and that very soon, to be a novelty, the capricious public left him in disgust. They now looked out for his defects alone, and he became in his turn totally neglected and forgotten: and instead of being the sole object of attention, and having the street where he lived so crowded with coaches of the nobility as to become a real nuisance to the neighbourhood, 'so,' he jestingly observed, 'that he

thought he must place cannon at the door to keep the multitude off from it,' he now found himself as entirely deserted as if his house had been infected with the plague. Such is the world!"

His popularity was not, however, so very brief as this description would induce us to infer. When the wonder of the town began to abate, the country came gaping in; and ere he wearied both he had augmented the original thirty guineas with which he commenced the adventure, to a very comfortable sum; had furnished a house in Orange Court, Leicester Fields, and was every way in a condition to bid immediate want defiance.

His progress in his art was great, and visible to all save the leaders of taste and fashion. When his works were crude and unstudied, their applause was deafening; when they were such as really merited a place in public galleries, the world, resolved not to be infatuated twice with the same object, paid him a cold, or at least a very moderate, attention. "Reynolds," says Wilton the sculptor, "is the only eminent painter who has been able to charm back the public to himself after they were tired of him." The somewhat rough and unaccommodating manners of Opie were in his way to fortune; it requires delicate feet to tread the path of portraiture; and we must remember that he was a peasant unacquainted with the elegance of learning, and unpolished by intercourse with the courtesies and amenities of polite life. Of this he could learn little in his father's

cottage, and Wolcot, whose skill lay in coarse satiric verse and in boisterous humour, could be but an indifferent instructor. He was thrown into the drawing-room rough and rude as he came from the hills of Cornwall, and had to acquit himself as well as he could. Fanned for the first time with duchesses' plumes, and enclosed in a glittering circle of garters and stars, a weak man might have been bewildered, and a very vain man too much elated. But he was neither weak nor vain; indeed he appears to have been a plain, bold man, with a moderate share of sensitiveness.

Mrs. Inchbald tells a charming story of Opie in his youth: "One Sunday afternoon, while his mother was at church, Mr. Opie, then a boy of ten or eleven years old, fixed his materials for painting in a little kitchen, directly opposite the parlour where his father sat reading the Bible. He went on drawing till he had finished everything but the head, and when he came to that, he frequently ran into the parlour to look up in his father's face. He repeated this extraordinary interruption so often, that the old man became quite angry, and threatened to correct him severely if he did the like again. This was exactly what the young artist wanted. He wished to paint his father's eyes when lighted up and sparkling with indignation; and having obtained his end, he quietly resumed his task. He had completed his picture before his mother's return from church, and on her entering the house he set it before her. She knew

it instantly; but ever true to her principles, she was very angry with him for having painted on a Sunday, thereby profaning the Sabbath Day. The child, however, was so elated by his success, that he disregarded her remonstrance, and hanging fondly round her neck, he was alive only to the pleasure she had given him by owning the strength of the resemblance. At this moment his father entered the room, and recognising his own portrait, immediately highly approved of his son's amusement during the afternoon, and exhibited the picture with ever-new satisfaction to all who came to the house; while the story of his anger at interruptions, so happily excused and accounted for, added interest to his narrative, and gratified still more the pride of the artist."

Anxious for fame, and yet resolved to live, Opie did well in dividing his pencil between portraiture and history. His chief excellence lies in the former; there he has great breadth, vigour, and natural force of character, touched, it must be allowed, in some instances with a certain air of village audacity, which comes from the artist rather than from the sitter. His portrait of Charles James Fox has been justly commended. When Fox, who sat opposite to Opie at the Academy dinner, heard the general applause which his portrait obtained, he remembered that he had given him less of his time than the painter had requested, and said across the table, "There, Mr. Opie, you see I was right; everybody thinks it could not be better. Now if I had minded you and con-

sented to sit again, you most probably would have spoiled the picture."

The ladies who sat for their portraits he found more difficult to deal with than Fox. There was at first a want of grace and softness in his female heads —he felt this early and laboured to amend it—but it is said that he did not wholly succeed till his second marriage (his first had proved unfortunate). "Opie," said one of his brethren when he exhibited some female portraits soon after that event, "we never saw anything like this in you before—this must be owing to your wife;" and it is likely that the compliment, though paid perhaps in jest, was nevertheless just. The habitual ruggedness of his personal manners yielded to the winning and graceful tact of Amelia Opie, and it is easy to believe that her presence might have the same influence upon his pencil.

As an historical painter Opie, it must be admitted, wanted poetic power to enable him to rise to the first eminence. His principal pieces were the "Murder of James the First of Scotland," the "Presentation in the Temple," "Jephthah's Vow," the "Death of Rizzio," "Arthur and Hubert," "Belisarius," "Juliet in the Garden," and the "Escape of Gil Blas and Musidora." "He painted what he saw," says Benjamin West, "in the most masterly manner, and he varied little from it. He saw Nature in one point more distinctly and forcibly than any painter that ever lived. The truth of colour, as conveyed to the eye through the atmosphere, by which the dis-

John Opie *Hanfstaengl*

A PORTRAIT OF A BOY

tance of every object is ascertained, was never better expressed than by him. He distinctly represented local colour in all its various tones and proportions, whether in light or in shadow, with a perfect uniformity of proportion. Other painters frequently make two separate colours of objects in light and shade, Opie never. With him no colour, whether white, black, primary, or compound, ever in any situation lost its respective hue."

His works were not the offspring of random fits of labour after long indulgences in idleness; they were the well-considered progeny of his mind and hand—the fruit of daily toil, in which every hour had its allotted task. "He was always in his painting-room," says Amelia Opie, "by half-past eight in winter and eight o'clock in summer; and there he generally remained, closely engaged in painting, till half-past four in winter and till five in summer. Nor did he ever allow himself to be idle when he had no pictures bespoken; and as he never let his execution rust for want of practice, he, in that case, either sketched out designs for historical or fancy pictures, or endeavoured by working on an unfinished picture of me to improve himself by incessant practice in that difficult branch of art, female portraiture. . . . Though he had a picture in the exhibition of 1801, which was universally admired and purchased as soon as beheld, he saw himself at the end of that year and the beginning of the next almost wholly without employment. . . . But even despondence did

not make him indolent; he continued to paint regularly as usual, and no doubt by that means increased his ability to do justice to the torrent of business which soon afterwards set in towards him, and never ceased to flow till the day of his death."

When Barry was ejected from the Professorship of Painting in the Royal Academy Opie offered himself as a candidate, but was unexpectedly opposed by Fuseli. When that eminent scholar was named, Opie relinquished his pretensions; but it is no small proof of his vanity that he declared as he withdrew from the contest, that he would have yielded to no one else. When Fuseli was made Keeper he renewed his claim, and was instantly elected.

When he had finished his course of lectures, Prince Hoare, the painter, requested an article for his periodical paper called *The Artist*. "I am tired," was his answer; "I am tired of writing. I shall be a gentleman during the spring months, keep a horse, and ride out every morning." This vision of happiness, such as it was, he lived not to realise. He was attacked by a slow and consuming illness, and died on the 9th April 1807. When it was known that he was seriously ill, his friends came round him with affectionate solicitude. Among those whom he had loved most was Henry Thomson, and to him he confided the finishing of the robes of the Duke of Gloucester's portrait. On Saturday, when the pictures were to be delivered to the exhibition, this picture was placed at the foot of his bed. A fit of

delirium had subsided; he lifted his head, and said, "There is not colour enough on the background." More colour was added. Opie looked at it with great satisfaction, and said with a smile, "Thomson, it will do now, it will do now; if you could not do it, nobody could." The delirium returned, and took its hue from the picture he had just looked at. He imagined himself employed in his favourite pursuit, and continued painting in idea till death interposed.

CHAPTER XIX

GEORGE MORLAND

1763–1804

GEORGE MORLAND was born in London on June 26, 1763. His father, Henry Robert Morland, and his grandfather were both painters of some repute in their day, while his mother was also an exhibitor at the Royal Academy.

With such progenitors it was no wonder that George from his earliest youth took instinctively to the brush and pencil. Many stories of youthful precocity are told of his childhood—how he drew on dusty tables when he was three, sold drawings before he was seven, mastered the anatomy of mice at ten, and modelled ships at the age of twelve. Whether we credit these tales or not, his talents seem to have impressed his parents so strongly that they decided without hesitation to train him up as an artist. When he reached the age of fourteen he was bound apprentice to his father, and for the next seven years toiled strenuously under his master's eye. His days were devoted to painting, his summer evenings to reading, and those of winter to drawing by lamplight.

In his student days young Morland painted little from Nature. His chief employment was to make

careful and detailed copies of Dutch, Flemish, and German landscapes, and he is said also to have copied some of Gainsborough's animal pictures. To this stringent discipline he owed no doubt much of that extraordinary facility and freedom of execution which characterised his later work. Many of these copies his father disposed of to dealers for his own profit, but even in these early days George managed to trade on his own account with friendly Jew dealers.

His actual upbringing was singular and unnatural. So anxious was his father to guard the boy from contamination that he was not allowed to associate with companions of his own age, and while his dawning abilities were most carefully fostered, the recreation necessary to a high-spirited and robust boy was continually denied him. All work and no play produced in Morland's case the worst results. When at last he succeeded in throwing off the parental thraldom, he flung himself recklessly into dissipation and gaiety. The rebound was inevitable. His whole home training had been a mistake, none the less that it was committed, as some of his biographers state, by loving parents with the best intentions and the most worthy motives. After leaving his father's house he was expected to support himself, and indeed he was given an excellent opportunity of doing so, for Romney offered to take him into his own house in Cavendish Square, paying him a salary of £300 a year, if he would sign articles of apprenticeship for three years. But the apprentice-

ship to his father had been so irksome that Morland refused this offer. His love of dissipation and his extravagance soon emptied his pockets, and he fell into the clutches of a crafty picture-dealer, an Irishman, who hired an attic for him in Martlett's Court, Bow Street, and kept him hard at work on drawings and pictures for which he received the veriest pittance, barely sufficient to keep body and soul together. During his time of bondage he painted enough pictures for the dealer to fill a small room, and to this early Morland exhibition his employer charged half-a-crown admission!

Escaping at last from this slavery, and leaving his master to pay the rent of his attic, he rode off to Margate in response to an invitation from Mrs. Hill, a wealthy admirer of his work, and under her patronage he fared well for a time with commissions for portraits and miniatures, while he occupied his leisure by falling in love with Jenny, the maid-servant of his patroness. To his friend George Dawe, R.A., he writes that she was "one of the sweetest creatures that was ever seen by man . . . upwards of six feet in height, and so extremely handsome that I have fell desperately in love, and what is charming, I find it returned. . . . I should certainly marry her, only as I am a great favourite of Mrs. H., she has made me promise to go to Paris this September, and marrying would exclude me entirely from that. . . ."

Shortly afterwards his flirtations were cut short, and Morland, weary for the moment of Mrs. Hill and her

THE INSIDE OF A STABLE

(After the painting by George Morland: No. 1030 in the National Gallery, London)

friends—"he could not bear to be stuck up in the society of her old maids"—hurried back to London with a well-laden purse and a craving for his former boon companions of the stable, playhouse, and tavern.

Soon he was back again at Margate, and we hear stories of his conviviality and his boyish love of fun and frolic at the King's Head Inn, where he was always a welcome customer, for when in funds he was lavish in hospitality; and as he was blessed, too, with a handsome face and figure, a merry wit and a fine voice, besides being a fair performer on the violin, he made friends easily. None could withstand his charm of manner and appearance. But he chose his companions carelessly, and under their pernicious influence developed habits which eventually proved his ruin. He does not appear, however, to have been worse than his own sitters, as a letter to Dawe shows. "Last Monday week," he writes, "almost everybody in Margate was drunk by reason of the Freemasons' meeting and fox hunt, and all my male sitters disappointed me. Some sent word they were engaged; some not very well; others could not get their hair dressed. But I found it was one general disorder. This was next morning."

His fondness for riding naturally led him to the racecourse, and on more than one occasion he donned the jockey's cap and jacket. Writing to Dawe he says, "You must know I have commenced a new business of jockey to the races. I was sent for to Mount Pleasant by the gentlemen of the turf to ride

a race for the silver cup, as I am thought to be the best horseman here. . . . Three parts of the people out of fun laid great bets that I should win the cup. . . . Then the drums beat, and we started. 'Twas a four-mile heat, and the first three miles I couldn't keep the horse behind them, being so spirited an animal. By that means he exhausted himself, and I soon had the mortification to see them come galloping past me hissing and laughing whilst I was spurring his guts out." Enraged at his defeat a mob of persons who had lost their money rushed out on horseback to thrash him, and Morland, finding he could not escape, challenged the man who led the attack to single combat, "though he was big enough," he writes, "to eat me." His pluck won over the crowd to his side, and he was led away in triumph with shouts.

At another race at Margate he was nearly killed because he won! "Near four hundred sailors, smugglers, fishermen, &c.," he says, "set upon me with sticks, stones, waggoners' whips, fists, &c., and one man, an innkeeper here, took me by the thigh and pulled me off the horse. I could not defend myself. The sounds I heard all round were: 'Kill him!' 'Strip him!' 'Throw him in the sea!' 'Cut off his large tail!' and a hundred other sentences worse than the first.' He was rescued with difficulty from the mêlée by his friends, a motley crew of gentlemen, postboys, hairdressers, bakers, and others. Later on in the evening, after "three crowns' worth of punch

at the King's Head," Morland and his comrades set out to chastise the parcel of blackguards who had avenged their losses on the victorious artist-jockey.

In October 1785 Morland, accompanied by Mrs. Hill, started for St. Omer, where there were many rich English residents from whom he expected portrait commissions. They set sail from Dover for Calais on a stormy day, the sea running very high, but nevertheless they had "the most amazing quick passage known these twelve years." "'Twas no longer," writes the artist, "than one hour and thirty-two minutes from pier to pier. . . . I was the second sick on board, and the first that got well. . . ."

The next day the party, travelling by coach and four, reached St. Omer, where Morland took an apartment, and "went to bed in a room as big as Westminster Hall, with two beds." "'Tis rather impossible," he says, "to find a bedroom in France with only one bed. So that makes good what Sterne says in the conclusion of his 'Sentimental Journey': 'and 'tis very common for gentlemen and ladies to lay in the same room at the same inns.'"

During his stay at St. Omer he received numerous pressing invitations from the gentles and the nobility to paint their portraits. He also made many sketches in France, which, according to Dawe, were extremely interesting from the power he possessed of seizing and displaying in a lively manner the peculiarities of the French people. Certainly he enjoyed his tour to the full. In one letter he expresses doubts about ever

returning to England, owing to the greater delights of France. "No danger of robbing," he writes, "and travelling very cheap; and a person may live very well for £30 per ann., and many have not more—people who ran away in the Rebellion and have continued here ever since. . . . Leathern breeches are only half a guinea a pair, shoes three shillings, cotton stockings half-a-crown; worsted stockings are dear and very bad. They make them of one piece, without any distinction for the foot. That must be formed by putting the stocking on."

When he left St. Omer he journeyed to Calais on board a barge, the passage costing about a shilling. But he complained bitterly of his travelling companions: "a set of friars called Roquilets, the most nasty set of people in the world. They never change their clothes until they drop off their backs; when they are so lousy, 'tis impossible they can bear them on themselves, they then send them to be baked to kill the lice!"

On his return to London, Morland again saw something of his Jenny, who had left Mrs. Hill's service and was then living with her brother in town. He proposed marriage, was accepted, and went so far as to publish the banns. Then, and not till then, did he bethink himself of ways and means. Owing to his extravagant habits he had little money laid by and no assured income, and so he sent a message to Jenny's brother, assuring him that the state of his purse and of his health made him reluctant to marry. But if

Jenny and her brother were bent on the match, he was ready to fulfil his contract. We are not told what the lady's feelings were, but her brother, after blaming Morland's conduct, broke off the engagement, probably, so far as George was concerned, a fortunate ending of the entanglement, for soon after, in July 1786, he married Anne, the sister of William Ward the engraver, brother of James Ward, afterwards R.A. William promptly followed suit by wedding Morland's sister, Maria, and the two couples entered upon married life, sharing the same house. But the double ménage did not last long. As was only to be expected differences occurred, and in three months the Morlands removed and set up a separate establishment, first in a small house in Camden Town on the Hampstead Road, and afterwards in a large one at the corner of Warren Place, where the artist soon struck up acquaintance with the postboys and drivers of the stage-coaches that passed his doors. So liberally did he treat his new friends that they were only too delighted to convey him, free of expense, to any part of the kingdom. In this way he got an intimate knowledge, which later he turned to good account, of the gentry haunting the stables and inns of the neighbourhood.

Morland seems to have produced many works of first-rate quality in 1788 while he was at Camden Town. In that year, it is said, he occupied the engravers with no fewer than thirty-two carefully finished pictures. The following year was equally

prolific, and he made a great deal of money. "There was," says Collins, "generally speaking, a constant market at his very elbow, and a frequent contention round his easel for every picture that was ready to be removed from it." But he had no idea of economy. His was a gay, generous, unsuspecting nature. He loved entertaining his friends at his own expense, nor was he particular about their social status. In truth, he preferred the society of persons of a lower rank than his own, for in their company he could act as he pleased. The result was that he was quickly surrounded by parasites—shameless, unprincipled men —who, whilst they seemed only intent upon praising his masterly genius and fancy for painting, were in reality practising with considerable dexterity and success the most fraudulent arts to deprive him of his well-earned property and deteriorate his health and morals. So well did they succeed that, in 1789, Morland was forced to leave Camden Town and take up his abode "within the verge of the Court," then a refuge for debtors. With the aid of his attorney, who seems to have been paid for his services in pictures, Morland succeeded in getting clear of his embarrassments and paid his creditors in full. He at once settled down in Leicester Street, where he obtained a number of private commissions. Among others he produced "Gipsies Kindling a Fire," for which he was paid forty guineas, a far larger sum than he was accustomed to get from the dealers and publishers who usually employed him. He also received

George Morland *Mansell*

DOOR OF A VILLAGE INN

at this period an offer to paint a series of pictures for the Prince of Wales, but for some reason this was declined.

His next move was to a "compact house" in Paddington—then a rural spot—nearly opposite the White Lion hostelry. This inn was a picturesque place much patronised by drovers, and there Morland had every opportunity of studying those cattle subjects which he loved so well.

But to a man of his character and habits the close proximity of an alehouse was most perilous, and the temptation to indulge in his besetting sin proved too strong for him. He also filled his house with low-class sporting characters, elected among other things to pose as a patron of the Ring, and took to speculating in horse-flesh. In a year or so he moved into a big house in the neighbourhood, where he kept a large retinue of servants, including a footman and two grooms, and again entertained lavishly. It is not surprising that the proceeds of his brush were not equal to the strain. The crash came, and the ill-starred painter fled from Paddington to a farm at Enderby, in Leicestershire, leaving his clamorous creditors to bewail unsatisfied debts to the extent of £4000.

While Morland was in retreat at Enderby painting rural subjects, arrangements were being made with his creditors which enabled him to return to London in 1791. He agreed to pay them £120 a month, and on that understanding a house in Charlotte

Street, Fitzroy Square, was rented for him by two of his chief creditors, and it was agreed that he should turn over a new leaf and devote himself to his work. He began well by painting the "Benevolent Sportsman," which he sold for seventy guineas, and he frequently earned one hundred guineas in a week. But after paying a few instalments he got weary of London, and accompanied by two or three of his friends he disappeared into the country with a supply of painting materials, from time to time despatching one of his companions to town to sell his pictures. Meanwhile his creditors searched in vain for their victim, so well concealed were his various hiding-places. "In all these excursions," says Dawe, "his chief amusements were to mix with the peasants of the places where he made any stay, to visit their cottages and play with their children, to whom he often gave money; thus he procured frequent opportunities for observing their manners, and occasionally assisted his memory by making slight sketches of their attitudes, dresses, &c." He also joined sporting parties, went to races, made friends with fishermen and sailors, but he was always ready for frolic.

In 1797 his father died, and Morland was urged to claim the family baronetcy then dormant, which, says Collins, was his undoubted right. But upon hearing that there was no emolument attached to the title, George refused to take any further interest in the matter. "Plain G. M.," he said, "will always sell my pictures. There is more honour in being a fine

painter than in being a fine gentleman." Harassed with the continual apprehension of a debtors' prison, the painter was constantly changing his place of residence. In Queen Anne Street East, where he lodged for a time, his temper, according to Collins, grew troublesome to himself and those about him. He brooded over his own misconduct, and, terrified with the sound of every strange voice, his constant theme was the horrors of a jail. This phantom eternally haunted his imagination in every terrific shape and form which his bewildered fancy painted it; and it was the general opinion then amongst his friends that he would either lose his senses or destroy himself in less than twenty-four hours if taken to any prison.

Hunted out of Queen Anne Street, he encountered many vicissitudes, finding refuge for a while in the house of his father-in-law, and later in the abode of a Methodist cobbler at Kennington Green, and finally at Hackney. Here for a time he managed to baffle the pursuit of his enemies, and "his mind enjoyed that state of calm serenity most favourable to study and improvement." His prices increased in consequence of the great improvement in his work, so that at this period he had every prospect of being able to satisfy his creditors, many of whom would have gladly accepted nine shillings in the pound. But further misfortunes befell him. The envious little community at Hackney conceived that his large earnings must be for some other art than that of making pictures. His charitable

neighbours, after cudgelling their addlepates for some time, at last arrived at the conclusion that Morland was a maker of forged Bank of England notes, being led to this decision by the frequent allusions the painter made to *impressions* and *engraved plates*. Notice was given to the authorities at the Bank, who despatched two of their most dexterous emissaries. But Morland, spying the officers in the distance, at once concluded that his retreat was discovered by his creditors, and made good his escape over the garden wall. The "dexterous emissaries" proceeded to search the house and break open every locked receptacle in spite of the explanations and exhortations of Morland's brother and wife. Of course nothing incriminating was found, and all that Morland received from the Bank by way of damages was the paltry sum of twenty guineas.

This incident unfortunately put his creditors once more upon his track, and the painter again was forced to flee from their vengeance. At first he found various places of refuge in London, then in 1797 he retired with his wife to the Isle of Wight. But misfortune still dogged his steps. While he was lodging in the house of a smuggler at Yarmouth, he and his brother and their servant were arrested as spies by order of the general officer commanding the district. The three were at breakfast when a lieutenant and six soldiers with bayonets fixed arrived and grounded arms in the dining-room. The painter, who was ever extremely timid and confused upon any sudden attack

where his personal liberty appeared in danger, upon this occasion betrayed so much agitation that the officer was convinced that he at all events must be guilty. The production of several drawings only served to confirm the lieutenant's opinion, and the unfortunate party was haled before a justice of the peace. The result of this examination was against the prisoners, and they were all marched a distance of twelve miles to Newport under a blazing sun, hooted all the way as traitors by the accompanying mob. After a grave admonition from the full bench of justices, who minutely examined Morland's portfolio of sketches, they were cautioned never again to be guilty of such dangerous practices as painting and drawing during their abode in that island as long as the war should continue.

In November 1799 he returned to London, only to be arrested for debt. But he soon "obtained the rules," or, in other words, was allowed to live in a district set apart for debtors, and he took a house in Lambeth Road. From this date until his death in 1804 his industry was incredible. In a period of about four years, despite his failing health, he produced no less than 192 pictures, and "in addition to this," Dawe says, "he made probably upwards of a thousand drawings . . . as it was customary for him to produce one almost every evening."

The sums he was in the habit of receiving while at this place, with anything like economy, would have enabled him to pay every shilling he owed. But an

open house and an enormous wine and spirit expenditure were his undoing.

The unnatural strain drove him to further excesses. He had recourse to gin to steady his hand, and occasionally he had to be supported at the easel by his servant. In 1802, in consequence of one of his frequent debauches, he had an apoplectic fit, which alarmed him extremely, and the end came in October 1804.

He was arrested for a paltry debt, a public-house score of £3, 10s., and was removed to a sponging house in Hatton Garden. The following day, in attempting to make a drawing, he was seized with a fit, and died at the age of forty-two.

His wife, in spite of all their domestic bickerings, says Collins, loved him too well to outlive him many days, and she died a few days after her husband.

The life of the artist is well summed up in Henley's brilliant epitaph: "Obliging dealers aiding, he coined himself into guineas, and so, like the reckless and passionate unthrift he was, he flung away his genius and his life in handfuls, till nothing else was left him but the silence and the decency of death."

CHAPTER XX

JOHN CROME

1768–1821

JOHN CROME, commonly known as "Old Crome," to distinguish him from his less famous son, John Berney Crome, who was also a painter, was born on December 22, 1768, in a small public-house at Norwich. His father apparently combined the trades of a journeyman weaver and a publican, but his gains were small, and it is probable that the lad's education was of the scantiest description.

At the age of twelve he took service as errand-boy with Dr. Rigby, a local physician, where, the story goes, he distinguished himself by bleeding one of his master's patients almost to death! But the distribution of medicine afforded no scope for his energies, and a year or two later he bound himself apprentice for a term of seven years to one Whisler, a coach, house, and sign painter. In this way he learned the secrets of mixing colours and of laying on paint in a broad and simple manner, for a signboard, to be effective from a distance, must be broadly handled, and Crome's wonderful simplicity of technique, and breadth of style, are no doubt due to his early training in this class of work. Some of his signs are still in existence, including the sign of the Sawyers, which is now in the possession of the Pockthorpe Brewery at

Norwich. He is said, too, to have invented the art of graining, or imitating in paint the natural markings of wood.

Towards the end of his apprenticeship he formed a close friendship with Robert Ladbrooke, then a printer's apprentice, who afterwards became a noted landscape-painter and one of the leaders of the Norwich School. Quite recently, it may be observed, one of Ladbrooke's pictures—a view of Oxford—was acquired for the National Gallery. Ladbrooke was about the same age as Crome, and the two youths had similar ambitions. While still apprentices they devoted their leisure moments to sketching in oils from nature, Crome using an oyster-shell as his palette. Later, according to Dawson Turner, they entered into a sort of artistic partnership, clubbed together to hire a garret for a studio and to buy prints to copy. Ladbrooke executed portraits at five shillings a head, and Crome painted landscapes which he occasionally sold for as much as thirty shillings. The firm, however, was not very successful, and after two years they separated, and Crome, at the suggestion of Thomas Harvey of Catton, a wealthy art patron, started business as a drawing-master. Harvey assisted him to get pupils and—what was even more valuable—gave him free access to his own choice collection of pictures, which included Gainsborough's famous "Cottage Door," a Hobbema, and a number of Flemish and Dutch works. About this time Crome made the acquaintance of his biographer, Dawson Turner, and

Sir William Beechey, R.A., a Norwich man, who, according to some accounts, also started life as a house-painter. The latter had long since left Norwich, and under royal patronage was carving out a successful career in London. His description of Crome is interesting. "Crome when first I knew him," wrote Beechey, "must have been about twenty years old, and was a very awkward, uninformed country lad, but extremely shrewd in all his remarks upon art, though he wanted words and terms to express his meaning. As often as he came to town he never failed to call upon me, and to get what information I was able to give him upon the subject of that particular branch of art which he had made his study. His visits were frequent, and all his time was spent in my painting-room when I was not particularly engaged. He improved so rapidly that he delighted and astonished me." From some accounts it appears that Crome also received assistance from Opie, but this was not before the year 1798.

While he was earning his living as a teacher of drawing, Crome did not scruple to turn an honest penny by reverting to his old trade, and we find that in 1803 he received £2, 14s. for painting, gilding, and lettering a sign. Apart from Dawson Turner's stories, there is not much evidence to show that Crome was ever hard pressed for money. He seems always to have had sufficient for his modest wants, and at any rate he was able to take to himself a wife when he was only twenty-three years of age. In 1792 he

married Phœbe Berney, of whom little is known, and in the following year his friend Ladbrooke married her sister, Mary.

For many years Crome found teaching a more remunerative employment than painting. In those days the mere landscape-painter fared badly. Portraiture was the fashionable and profit-bringing branch of art, and even Gainsborough, whose fame as a portrait-painter was well established, was unable to sell his magnificent paintings of Suffolk scenery. But teaching had its advantages. It brought him into touch with many of the great families in the neighbourhood, who commissioned pictures, and in this way he acquired at all events a local celebrity. "As a teacher," says Dawson Turner, "he was eminently successful. He seldom failed to inspire into his pupils a portion of his own enthusiasm; and no small number of the most talented among them so entered into his feelings, and so followed in his track, that time only was wanting to make them successful imitators of his style."

Though Crome painted as a rule in his studio from studies, drawings, and sketches taken on the spot, his classes were generally held out of doors. On one occasion, another painter meeting him in the country surrounded by his pupils remarked, "Why, I thought I had left you in the city, engaged in your school." "I am in my school," replied Crome, "and teaching my scholars from the only true examples. Do you think," he asked, pointing to the distant view, "that either you or I can do better than that?"

In the diary of Richenda Gurney, as we learn from Mr. Augustus Hare's "The Gurneys of Earlham," the following amusing entry occurs: "Jan. 17, 1798. —I had a good drawing morning, but in the course of it gave way to passion with both Crome and Betsy—Crome because he would attend to Betsy and not to me, and Betsy because she was so provoking!"

Crome accompanied the Gurneys on several pleasant excursions to the Lake District, Wales, and the south coast, where he made sketches from which he afterwards produced pictures, but his heart was in Norwich and its neighbourhood, and his best work was done there. Unlike Gainsborough and Constable, who eventually made London their home, Crome, though he appears to have been an occasional visitor to the metropolis, never abandoned his beloved country.

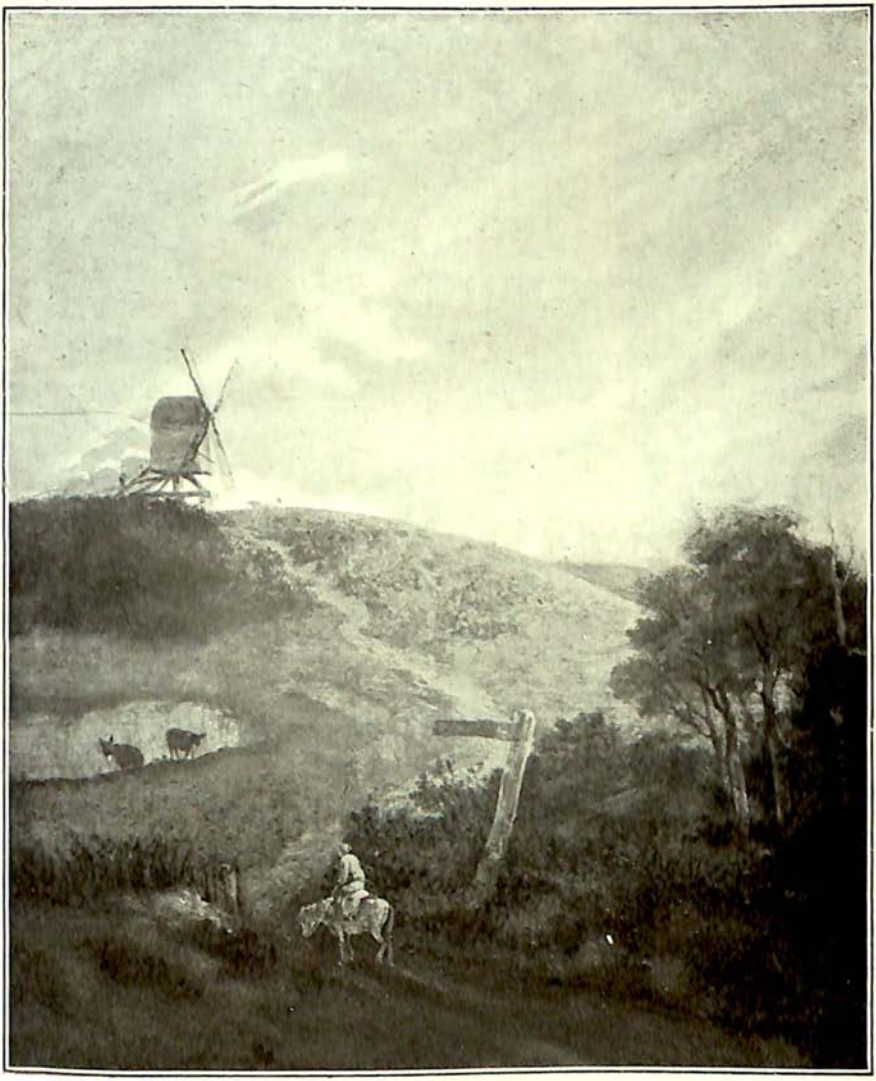
Norwich was at this time remarkable as an art centre, principally owing to the influence of Crome. But he was not the only painter of repute. John Sell Cotman, whose fame is now scarcely second to that of Crome, Vincent, and Stark, with Stannard Thirtle and the Ladbrookes, were all producing fine work. These men laid the foundation of what is known as the Norwich School, the first and, until comparatively lately, the only provincial school in England.

In 1803 the first meeting of the Norwich Society of Artists was held in a squalid building, called the Hole in the Wall, in St. Andrews, Norwich. The Society was formed, as its lengthy and grandiloquent title explains, "for the purpose of an inquiry into the

rise, progress, and present state of Painting, Architecture, and Sculpture, with a view to point out the best methods of study, and to attain to greater perfection in these arts." It was, as Wodderspoon termed it, "a small joint-stock association both of accomplishments and worldly goods." The first President of the Society was W. C. Leeds. The members were elected by ballot, and the Society met once a fortnight in the evening to study books on art, prints, and drawings, and to hear and discuss a paper read by one of the members on a previously arranged subject. A supper of bread and cheese was also provided by each member in turn. The Society held its first exhibition in 1805, and Crome contributed more than twenty works out of the total number of 223. He was not elected President until 1810, when Cotman was made Vice-President. In spite of a secession headed by Ladbrooke in 1816, the Society flourished for some years after Crome's death.

From 1806, when he first exhibited, to 1818 he contributed thirteen pictures to the Royal Academy, all of which, except "A Blacksmith's Shop," were landscapes.

In 1814 Crome and two friends visited Paris, but scarcely any record remains of his journey or of his impressions. In a letter to his wife he writes: "This morning I am going to see the object of my journey, that is, the Tuileries. I am told I shall find many English artists. . . . I believe the English may boast of having the start of these foreigners, but a happier



John Crome

THE WINDMILL

race of people there cannot be. I shall make this journey pay. I shall be very careful how I lay out my money. I have seen some shops. They ask treble what they will take, so you may suppose what a set they are. . . . —I am, &c., yours till death,

"JOHN CROME."

He made up for his linguistic deficiencies by making sketches of what he wanted, not always with happy results, as once, when he had drawn a picture of a boiled egg, he received a salt-cellar!

The great "Mousehold Heath," which hangs in the National Gallery, was produced about the year 1816. It was painted, as Crome himself said, "for air and space," and affords a fine example of his best period. Yet for all its splendour it fetched but £1 at a sale shortly after his death!

Crome's income is said never to have exceeded £800 a year. Even in his later years his prices were low, and he seldom received more than £50, however large the work. Nevertheless he lived in comfort, keeping two horses to enable him to drive round to the great houses in the neighbourhood, where he gave lessons, and he spent considerable sums upon his collection of books and pictures. His jovial nature and interesting and lively conversation made him welcome everywhere, no less in the fine country houses which he visited as a teacher than in his favourite tavern in the market-place, whither he betook himself of an evening to enjoy his glass and a gossip with his friends.

Owing to his teaching engagements his time for painting was limited, and the pictures actually painted by Crome are probably but a small proportion of those attributed to his brush.

His aim was ever to convey a sense of dignity and breadth. "Trifles in nature," he wrote in a letter to his friend and pupil, James Stark, "must be overlooked that we may have our feelings raised by seeing the whole picture at a glance, not knowing how or why we are so charmed." And again on his deathbed, after urging his son to paint for fame and fame alone, he said, "If your subject is only a pigsty, dignify it." "All about him," says Allan Cunningham, "is sterling English; he has no foreign airs or put-on graces; he studied and understood the woody scenery of his native land with the skill of a botanist and the eye of a poet. To him a grove was not a mere mass of picturesque stems and foliage; each tree claimed a separate sort of handling; he touched them according to their kind; with him an ash hung with its silver keys was different from an oak covered with acorns. Nor was it his pleasure only to show Nature silent and inanimate; to the grove he gave its tenants, to the glades their cattle and their cottages; nothing was mean, all was natural and striking."

Crome died in 1821, in the fulness of his powers, after a few days' illness. His last recorded words were, "Hobbema, my dear Hobbema, how I have loved you!"

CHAPTER XXI

SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE

1769–1830

LAWRENCE, the youngest of sixteen children, was born at Bristol in 1769. His father was landlord of the Black Bear at Devizes, and taught him, before he was five years old, to spout passages of poetry for the entertainment of customers, and to draw their portraits. Garrick was once pleased, during his stay at the Black Bear, to listen complacently while the boy, urged by his father, recited a long passage from Shakespeare: on his return, as he alighted, he called out, "Landlord, has Tommy learnt any more speeches, eh?" and ordering the boy and his tea to be taken to the summer-house in the garden, said, "Come now, my man, begin"; and when the tea and the spouting were finished, he clapped his head, and said, "Bravely done, Tommy; whether will ye be a painter or a player, eh?"

Much against the boy's wish the idea of the stage was abandoned, and at ten years old, or little more, he accompanied his father, who had failed in business, to Oxford, where he was soon actually engaged in painting the portraits of the most eminent persons then at Oxford: besides the dons, says Williams, his

biographer, "many of the younger nobility and gentry were anxious to have their portraits taken by the phenomenon, and the female beauty of this dignified city and its wealthy neighbourhood equally pressed upon his talents." From Oxford the family went to Bath; sitters were numerous, and those who at first only considered him as a curiosity, began to recognise the presence of real taste and elegance in his pictures. His price, a guinea at first, was soon raised to a guinea and a half; his portrait of Mrs. Siddons as "Zara" was engraved; his fame spread far and wide; Sir Henry Harpur desired to adopt him as his son; and Prince Hoare, the painter, saw something so angelic in his looks, that he proposed to paint him as a Christ. His studio before he was twelve years old was the favourite resort of the beauty and fashion and taste of Bath; young ladies loved to sit and converse with this handsome prodigy; men of taste and *vertù* purchased his crayon heads, which he drew in vast numbers, and carried them far and near, even into foreign lands, to show as the work of the boy-artist of Britain.

With his seventeenth year the true fame of Lawrence commences, for then he first dipped his brush in oil colours, and began to free himself from the captivating facilities of crayons. He came up to London in 1787, and took handsome apartments in Leicester Fields, where he opened an exhibition of his works, over which his father presided. But the charm which his extreme youth had formerly bestowed was passed and gone, and little was made by the wondrous "boy-

PORTRAIT OF WILLIAM WILBERFORCE

(After the painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence, now in the National Portrait Gallery, London)

painter," who, however, devoted himself seriously to studying at the Academy. To the President he went with a letter of introduction from Prince Hoare. When Lawrence called, it happened that Reynolds was being pestered by an impertinent student, who was defending his picture against Reynolds' remarks. "Well, well! go on, go on!" said Sir Joshua, and turned from him to Lawrence, who stood with an oil-portrait of himself in his hand, painted in 1786. He placed it in a proper light, and looked at it long and attentively. "Now, young man," he said, "I must have some talk with *you*. I suppose you think the sentiment of this very fine and the colouring very natural?" Lawrence spoke with modesty. Reynolds fixed his keen eyes on him. "You have been looking at the old masters I see; but my advice is this: study Nature, study Nature." They parted mutually pleased with each other, but it has been said by those who had the means of knowing, that Reynolds, on examining the early female portraits of Lawrence, remarked that they were deficient in the meek and modest composure which belongs to the loftier order of female expression, and hazarded a doubt whether this fault would not adhere to him. On the other hand, the generous President is reported to have said to the younger painter, on seeing his fine whole-length portrait of Miss Farren: "In you, sir, the world will expect to see accomplished that which I have failed to achieve."

The picture that may be regarded as the founda-

tion of his fame was this portrait of Miss Farren, afterwards Countess of Derby, in which he caught all the fascination of her looks, and put into her eyes a lustre new to English art. In other respects there was a strange deficiency of taste and propriety, the actress being painted in a winter cloak and muff with naked arms. It was nevertheless favourably compared with Reynolds, whose "Mrs. Billington as Cecilia" was well remembered, and considered equal to Hoppner, who, ten years older, and with the patronage of the Prince of Wales, which brought half the loveliness of the land to his easel, supplied the exhibition annually with likenesses of ladies of quality. The public praised, but criticism was not sparing. Lawrence had never felt the rod before, and was astonished and confounded with the complaint of want of propriety in the costume, till he was tranquillised by the assurance of Burke that "painters' proprieties are the best."

His portrait of the Queen and Princess Amelia, exhibited in 1788, told that (although not yet twenty years old) he had won the notice and patronage of the throne. How this was achieved—for no one has imputed it to the sense which the King could entertain of his merit, since his Majesty had long neglected Reynolds—has never yet been related. George III. had an aversion to all artists who claimed fame from having studied abroad, and Lawrence was wholly of home manufacture. By whatever means obtained, he had skill enough to retain his advantage. He pleased the

Princesses by his pencil and by his manners; and he won the regard of the foreign domestics by well-timed and gentle flirtations with the spouse of one of the Court musicians. These latter were in their nature so harmless, as to amuse the lady herself and excite merriment in the King and Queen, who occasionally rallied him upon his gallantry.

Those whom the King desired to honour were in the sure way to preferment. He had been chiefly instrumental in founding the Academy, and considered it one of the blessings of his reign, in which all men of merit in his sight had a right to participate. But by the law which the King himself sanctioned, no artist could be admitted an Associate under twenty-four years of age; and as Lawrence was not yet twenty-one, his Majesty was in despair, till some one proposed that Lawrence should be made a sort of extra or supplemental Associate till his standing might entitle him to come in regularly. This was eagerly supported by Reynolds and West, but opposed by thirty-seven of their brethren, who brought forward Wheatley and elected him in the teeth of the royal recommendation. On the next vacancy Lawrence was proposed again; he was yet far from twenty-four, and several of the members said the evasion of the law was destructive of all order, and that the royal wish, though courteously expressed, was an attack upon their independence. However, on the 10th November 1791 he was elected a supplemental Associate, a sort of honour which no one has enjoyed

either before or since, and which occasioned a lampoon from Peter Pindar called "The Rights of Kings."

Amid all his success and fine company he had his own vexations. Want of money was always with Lawrence the source of much unhappiness. His father had embarked in speculations above his capacity and purse, and the deficiencies had to be made good. His money coming in as luck sent customers, each sum was apt to be looked upon as a windfall, and squandered accordingly; while to add to all he loved to associate with expensive companions, and never for one moment carried into effect any one of those schemes of economy which his frequent distresses made him vow. He began the world deeply in debt —his father kept him poor; and when manhood came, and money poured in as it never before poured on any painter, a third of it was lost in the traffic of accommodation bills; another portion was lost for want of a well-arranged plan of domestic outlay; and, let it never be forgotten, much was swallowed up in matters of charity, for he was at all times eminently generous. His money melted away like snow upon thatch, and dropped through a thousand invisible openings. He often alluded to this circumstance himself, and ingenuously acknowledged that he won much, and, without being a man of expense, spent it all. "I began life wrongly," he once said in after years; "I spent more money than I earned, and involved myself in debt for which I have been paying

heavy interest." Royal favour and public fame had now made him, in his twenty-third year, a person of note and consideration. When his paintings made their appearance in the exhibition, their beauty of drawing and truth of colouring were sharply criticised; in particular by the venomous Antony Pasquin, a sample of whose pen is perhaps worth giving. "Mr. Lawrence began his professional career," he writes, "upon a false and delusive principle; his portraits were delicate, but not true; and because he met the approbation of a few fashionable spinsters, he vainly imagined that his labours were perfect. He may claim the merit, like Epicurus of old, of being self-taught. If he had enjoyed the advantage of having studied in Italy, and been bred in the school of the Caracci, instead of the seminaries of Somersetshire, I think he might have ranked among the most prominent masters in either of the Roman or Florentine Academies. All the assistance he had to cultivate his genius was the unremitting attention of a tender father, who, though he knew but little of the arts, knew much of his duty. It is but justice to Mr. Lawrence to say that he repays this parental kindness with the most filial piety."

In December 1795 the Royal Academy admitted him a member, and immediately many titled and important persons entered their names as candidates for their likenesses, and he addressed himself with great diligence to the task of portraiture. It had for some time, however, been whispered that he was

busied on a grand poetic work: his friends alone were admitted to see it during progress. The grandeur of the outlines, the magnificence of the colouring, and the sublimity of the sentiment, were all spoken of in more than the common rapture of eulogy. The subject was, however, left a secret till the exhibition of 1797 opened up the mystery, when it was found to be "Satan calling to his Legions."[1]

While many criticised, Fuseli also complained; his complaint being that Lawrence had stolen his devil from him, and his criticism that the figure was the Lubber Fiend, and not the Master Fiend of Milton. When Fuseli accused Lawrence of the theft, "In truth I did take the idea from you," the other replied, "but it was from your person, not from your paintings. When we were together at Stackpole Court in Pembrokeshire, you may remember how you stood on yon high rock which overlooks the bay of Bristol, and gazed down upon the sea which rolled so magnificently below. You were in raptures, and while you were crying, 'Grand! grand! Jesu Christ, how grand! how terrific!' you put yourself in a wild posture; I thought on the Devil looking into the abyss, and took a slight sketch of you at the moment: here it is. My Satan's posture now, was yours then."

Pasquin, we may be sure, did not let "Satan" pass without comment. "The figure of Satan is colossal

[1] Now on the staircase leading to the Diploma Gallery at Burlington House.

and very ill-drawn," he says; "the body is so disproportioned to the extremities that it appears all legs and arms, and might at a distance be mistaken for a sign of the Spread Eagle. The colouring has as little analogy to truth as the contour, for it is so coloured that it conveys an idea of a mad sugar-baker dancing naked in the conflagration of his own treacle. But the liberties taken with his infernal majesty are so numerous, so various, and so insulting, that we are amazed that the ecclesiastic orders do not interfere in behalf of an old friend." Lawrence himself thought better of it, and was not afraid of saying so. "The Satan," he said, "answered my secret motives in attempting it; my success in portraits will no longer be thought accident or fortune; and if I have trod the second path with honour, it is because my limbs are strong. My claims are acknowledged by the circle of taste, and are undisputed by competitors and rivals."

To paint up to the expectations of captious critics was, perhaps, what Lawrence never tried: he probably thought the praise he received was right and the censure wrong. Be that as it may, his chief study was to meet the rivalry of Hoppner, who had at this time nearly monopolised the youthful beauty of the nation. This rivalry was perhaps injurious to the true fame of Lawrence, for it induced him to turn his attention to the graces and delicacies of his art at the expense of that stately and serene simplicity of style which ought to have been his mark.

The strife between the two painters was maintained for many seasons; sometimes public opinion was with the one, sometimes with the other; but it was observed by all good judges that Lawrence was gaining ground, and that the fascinations of his style were prevailing, even if the witty poet, at a later date, said, "Phillips shall paint my wife and Lawrence my mistress."

His intimacy with Mrs. Siddons, whom he painted as "Aspasia," had given rise to the most romantic stories of his relations with her two lovely daughters; but however much or little truth there may have been in these, he was suspected of serious love-making in a much higher quarter in the opening years of the new century. For some time he had been a frequent guest at Montague House, Blackheath, the residence of the Princess of Wales, and as he continued his attentions after her portrait was finished, his visits were ascribed to no proper motive. This was rigorously inquired into by Commissioners appointed to investigate the general conduct of her Royal Highness; but of all that was criminal the charity or the justice of the Commissioners exonerated her, and the conduct of the painter would have been forgotten in a week had not his own restiveness under the suspicion hurried him before a magistrate to make oath that his visits arose from friendship, and were Platonic and pure. That he had been indiscreet may be gathered from the report that a lady—one of those who thought the poetry and the conversation

Sir Thomas Lawrence

A CHILD WITH A KID

of Lawrence alike inspired—whispered in a fever of alarm that he would surely *lose his head.*

From the period of the "Delicate Investigation" of 1806 till the death of Hoppner in 1810, Lawrence was less heard of than usual; even his excess of sitters had abated a little. A change had taken place in the feelings of the Court; Beechey now engaged the patronage of the palace, Hoppner was still the favourite of the Prince of Wales, and the friends of Lawrence imagined that his popularity was on the wane. But this was not so; and he soon moved from Greek Street, Soho, which was becoming less respectable, to 65 Russell Square, where he was followed by more than even the usual number of sitters. In 1802 his charge for a whole-length was 120 guineas; in 1806, 200; in 1808, 320; and after the death of Hoppner in 1810, he increased the price of heads to 100, and full-lengths to 400 guineas.

In 1814 he was taken into favour by the Prince Regent, and was summoned to York House to paint the portraits of the Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, Prince Blücher, and the Hettman Platoff, who were all waiting to take their turns at his easel. In the following year he was knighted, and the Prince assured him that he was proud in conferring a mark of his favour on one who had raised the character of British art in the estimation of all Europe. Nor was this all. After Napoleon's final overthrow, the Regent despatched him to Aix-la-Chapelle to execute the portraits of the assembled Sovereigns for his gallery

at Windsor, and in order that he might appear in a style worthy of the first maritime power in Europe, a thousand a year was allowed him for contingent expenses. He was afterwards to go to Rome on the same conditions to paint the Pope and one or two of his Cardinals. The whole collection of these European portraits amounted in number to twenty-four, and Lawrence has been very communicative in his correspondence about them; but it must be confessed that he was much too fond of setting down titles at all their length, of describing public entertainments, of noting the idle etiquette and diplomatic minutiæ of Courts and assemblies; he dazzles his distant friends with stars and ribands and orders, and introduces a thousand trifles beneath the notice of anybody but a determined tire-woman.

After remaining much longer in Italy than he intended, he returned to England in 1820, having left behind him wherever he went admiration for his talents and respect for his character and manners. Events of some importance had occurred in his absence. George III. was dead, and George IV. reigned in his stead. Benjamin West, too, the President of the Royal Academy, had expired, full of years and honours; and the first intimation which Lawrence received of this event was that he was to be elected in his place; and when he took the chair among his brethren there were few who did not acknowledge that for reputation in art, for manners, and for all those acquirements which give a lustre to

station, the choice could not have been amended. Even Fuseli, who had such a fine taste as seldom to be satisfied with anything, growled out his approbation in these words, "Well, well! Since they must have a face painter to reign over them, let them take Lawrence; he can, at least, paint eyes!"

The King, in giving his sanction to the choice of the Academicians, added a gold chain and medal of himself, inscribed thus: "From his Majesty George IV. to the President of the Royal Academy."

The last ten years of Lawrence's life were to all appearances a period of unbroken prosperity. His public reputation was extravagantly high—so were his prices. Thus he received 1500 guineas for the portrait of Lady Gower and her child; 600 guineas for that of Lord Durham's son. Yet so wretchedly did he manage his monetary affairs that he was seldom free from anxiety. He died in 1830 after a few days' illness and was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral.

CHAPTER XXII

JOHN CONSTABLE

1776–1837

JOHN CONSTABLE was born in 1776 at East Bergholt, in Suffolk, where his father, a miller of yeoman descent, owned a considerable property, including the famous Flatford Mill, immortalised in the picture of that name now in the National Gallery, and in this remote village John worked industriously for some years as a miller. The lad, we read, was well set up, muscular, and of a comely appearance, so much so, indeed, that he was known as the "handsome miller." But this occupation did not satisfy his youthful aspirations. He loved rather to wander, sketch-book or canvas in hand, among the woods and fields with a young plumber, John Dunthorne by name, a fellow-villager, who was imbued with the same love of Nature and the same desire to place the beauties of rustic scenery upon canvas.

At other times the boy was to be found painting at Dunthorne's cottage. His parents, however, regarded their son's artistic proclivities with no favourable eye. To them the mill seemed to offer a securer future than the studio. But so strongly was the lad bent on an artistic career, that in 1795 he was allowed

to go to London for the purpose of ascertaining what chance he possessed of success as a painter. Full of courage and hope, young Constable called on Joseph Farington, R.A., with a letter of introduction, and his confidence in himself was further confirmed by the encouraging words of the Academician. Farington was clearly much impressed by the boy's untutored efforts, and at an early period of their acquaintance he remarked with singular prescience, that one day that style of landscape would "form a distinct feature in the art." Even after this favourable report his parents still wished John to follow in his father's footsteps, and in a letter to John Thomas Smith, the etcher and engraver, whose acquaintance Constable had made in London, Mrs. Constable says, "We are anticipating the satisfaction of seeing John at home in the course of a week or ten days, to which I look forward with the hope that he will attend to business, by which he will please his father and ensure his own respectability and comfort. Fortunately for the world this hope was not fulfilled, the certainty of "respectability and comfort" was sacrificed, and on February 4th John Constable was admitted as a student at the Royal Academy. Settling in lodgings in Cecil Street, Strand, he directed all his energies to the study of technique, and allowed himself few holidays in the country. To Dunthorne he wrote, "I shall remain in town the chief of this summer. Indeed I find it necessary to fag at copying some time yet to acquire execution. The more facility of practice I get, the

more pleasure I shall find in my art; without the power of execution, I should be continually embarrassed, and it would be a burthen to me."

In 1802, Constable's name appears for the first time in the catalogue of the exhibition of the Royal Academy. But he did not always find favour with the judges. On one occasion, disappointed at the rejection of a picture of Flatford Mill, he took it to the President of the Academy, Mr. West, who said, "Don't be disheartened, young man, we shall hear of you again; you must have loved Nature very much before you could have painted this." The President then took a piece of chalk and showed Constable how he might improve the chiaroscuro by some additional touches of light between the stems and branches of the trees, saying, "Always remember, sir, that light and shadow *never stand still.* In your skies, always aim at *brightness*, although there are states of the atmosphere in which the sky itself is not bright. I do not mean that you are not to paint solemn or lowering skies, but even in the darkest effects there should be brightness. Your darks should look like the darks of silver, not of lead or of slate." Soon afterwards West again rendered Constable much assistance in the furthering of his artistic career by advising him not to accept the post of drawing-master in a school which his friend Dr. Fisher, with the best intentions, had obtained for him. West pointed out that if he accepted it, he must give up all hopes of distinction, and further undertook the difficult task

of refusing the offer without giving offence to Dr. Fisher. On this subject Constable wrote to Dunthorne in May 1802: "I hope I have now done with the business that brought me to town with Dr. Fisher. It is sufficient to say that had I accepted the situation offered, it would have been a death-blow to all my prospects of perfection in the art I love. For these few weeks past, I believe I have thought more seriously of my profession than at any other time of my life, of that which is the surest way to excellence. I am just returned from a visit to Sir George Beaumont's pictures with a deep conviction of the truth of Sir Joshua Reynolds' observation, that 'there is no easy way of becoming a good painter.' For the last two years I have been running after pictures, and seeking the truth at second-hand. I have not endeavoured to represent Nature with the same elevation of mind with which I set out, but have rather tried to make my performances look like the work of other men. I am come to a determination to make no idle visits this summer, nor to give up my time to commonplace people. I shall return to Bergholt, when I shall endeavour to get a pure and unaffected manner of representing the scenes that may employ me. There is little or nothing in the exhibition worth looking up to. *There is room enough for a natural painter.* The great vice of the present day is *bravura*, an attempt to do something beyond the truth. Fashion always had, and will have, its day; but truth in all things will only last, and can only have just claims on posterity.

I have reaped considerable benefit from exhibiting; it shows me where I am, and in fact tells me what nothing else could."

In April of the following year, 1803, he made a trip from London to Deal in the *Coutts*, East Indiaman, with Captain Torin, a friend of his father. He stayed on board nearly a month, and employed himself in "making drawings of ships in all situations," while the boisterous weather which prevailed during the latter part of the trip allowed the young painter an opportunity of making notes of the grand effects of storm clouds. Three years later he went on a sketching tour in Westmorland and Cumberland, but the mountainous landscape of the north did not appeal to him so keenly as the peaceful scenery in the valley of the Stour, and he made little use of the numerous sketches he brought back. The solitude of the mountains, as he was wont to say, oppressed his spirits, and he required villages, churches, farmhouses, and cottages to satisfy his conception of landscape. His parents wished him to apply himself to portrait-painting as a more profitable side of his profession, but that branch of art did not attract him. "I am making sad ravages of my time," he writes, "with the wretched portraits I mentioned to you." In short, he only painted portraits when in need of money.

The events leading up to his marriage are interesting. The young painter, while visiting his parents at East Bergholt, made the acquaintance of Maria Bicknell, granddaughter of Dr. Rhudde, Rector of the

FLATFORD MILL ON THE RIVER STOUR

(After the painting by John Constable: No. 1273 in the National Gallery, London)

parish. This friendship, begun when Maria was yet a child, had in 1811 grown into a strong mutual attachment, and Constable proposed marriage. But Fortune did not smile at first. Many objections to their union were urged by Miss Bicknell's friends in general, and by Dr. Rhudde in particular. The old man was probably unwilling that his granddaughter should marry a man below herself in point of fortune. Moreover, the difficulties of the situation were further accentuated by the unfriendly relations then subsisting between Dr. Rhudde and Constable's father. The real reason, as subsequently became manifest, of Mr. Bicknell's opposition, was his fear lest such an imprudent marriage should result in the exclusion of his daughter from any share under the will of her wealthy grandfather. And so it happened that five years elapsed before the hopes of the young people were realised. During this period they corresponded frequently, and after a time Constable was allowed to pay occasional visits to his lady. Although Maria's letters frequently contained promises of constancy and affection, she was yet sufficiently worldly-wise to withstand her lover's entreaties to make a start on a very small and uncertain income. "We should both of us," she writes, "be bad subjects for poverty, should we not? Even painting would go badly; it could hardly survive in domestic worry." And again, "Indeed, my dear John, people cannot live now upon four hundred a year—it is a bad subject; therefore, adieu to it." Spurred on to obtain the object of his affec-

tions, Constable accepted several portrait commissions, which he carried out successfully. He says, "My price for a head is fifteen guineas, and I am tolerably expeditious when I can have fair-play at my sitter." At the same time his landscape painting was becoming more appreciated. In 1812 his friend, John Fisher, referring to a small landscape, a gift from Constable, writes, "Your painting has been much criticised; disliked by *bad* judges, gaped at by *no* judges, and admired by *good* ones." The young artist also received great encouragement on one occasion from Benjamin West. They were discussing one of Constable's pictures which had been accepted by the Academy, and on the painter inquiring of the President whether he considered that mode of study as proper for *laying the foundation* of real excellence, he received this gratifying reply, "Sir, I considered that you have *attained* it."

In 1815 Constable exhibited no less than eight works at the Academy. They were well received, and did much to confirm his position in the world of art. On the strength of this success he persuaded Miss Bicknell to marry him, though her father and grandfather were still averse to the match, and the marriage took place on October 2, 1816. It is pleasant to relate that Mr. Bicknell did not long withhold his forgiveness from his daughter. Dr. Rhudde, however, was not so soon reconciled to the marriage, but fortunately for the young couple his wrath was appeased before he died in 1819, and he left his granddaughter a probably unexpected legacy of £4000.

Constable continued yearly to contribute to the Academy exhibitions, and in 1819 he sent the largest and most important work he had yet produced, "A Scene on the River Stowe," afterwards called, from a white horse in a barge near the foreground, "Constable's White Horse." This landscape, which attracted more attention than anything he had before exhibited, resulted in his election, in the following November, as an Associate of the Royal Academy. Dr. Fisher, on writing to congratulate him on this somewhat tardy recognition of his genius, says, "You owe your election to no favour, but solely to your own unsupported, unpatronised merits." Nor was Fisher content with merely praising his friend. He purchased "The White Horse," and thereby rendered Constable a service which was, perhaps, of more importance to him at that crisis of his life than it would have been at any later period.

Constable used to say that the time spent at his father's mills was not wholly lost to him as a painter. By a wind-miller every change of the sky is watched with peculiar interest. In a description of an engraving entitled "Spring," from one of his sketches, he says, "It may perhaps give some idea of one of those bright and silvery days in the spring, when at noon large garish clouds surcharged with hail and sleet sweep with their broad shadows the fields, woods, and hills, and by their depths enhance the value of the vivid greens and yellows so peculiar to the season. The *natural history*, if the expression may be used, of the

skies, which are so particularly marked in the hail squalls at this time of the year, is this: The clouds accumulate in very large masses, and from their loftiness seem to move but slowly; immediately upon these large clouds appear numerous opaque patches, which are only small clouds passing rapidly before them, and consisting of isolated portions detached probably from the larger cloud. These floating much nearer the earth may perhaps fall in with a stronger current of wind, which as well as their comparative lightness causes them to move with greater rapidity; hence they are called by wind-millers and sailors *messengers*, and always portend bad weather. They float midway in what may be termed the lanes of the clouds; and from being so situated, are almost uniformly in shadow, receiving a reflected light only from the clear blue sky immediately above them. In passing over the bright parts of the large clouds they appear as darks; but in passing the shadowed parts, they assume a grey, a pale, or a lurid hue."

"That landscape painter who does not make his skies a very material part of his composition," he writes on another occasion—in a private letter to Archdeacon Fisher in 1821—"neglects to avail himself of one of his greatest aids. . . . I have often been advised to consider my sky as '*a white sheet thrown behind the objects.*' Certainly, if the sky is obtrusive, as mine are, it is bad; but if it is evaded, as mine are not, it is worse; it must, and always shall with me, make an effectual part of the composition. It will

be difficult to name a class of landscape in which the sky is not the keynote, the standard of scale, and the chief organ of sentiment. You may conceive then what a 'white sheet' would do for me, impressed as I am with these notions, and they cannot be erroneous. The sky is the source of light in Nature, and governs everything; even our common observations on the weather of every day are altogether suggested by it. The difficulty of skies in painting is very great, both as to composition and execution; because, with all their brilliancy, they ought not to come forward, or, indeed, be hardly thought of any more than extreme distances are; but this does not apply to phenomena or accidental effects of sky, because they always attract particularly."

While still a youth, and before he had left his native village, he was fortunate enough to meet Sir George Beaumont, whose mother then resided at Dedham. At her house he first saw a picture by Claude, the "Hagar," now in the National Gallery, and several drawings in water-colours by Thomas Girtin, besides winning the interest and the friendship of Sir George Beaumont.

In 1823 Constable went to stay with Sir George and Lady Beaumont at Cole-Orton Hall, Leicestershire, where he revelled in the collection of Claudes, Wilsons, and Poussins. "I am left entirely to do as I like, with full range over the whole house, in which I may *saturate* myself with art." Though Sir George and Constable agreed, generally, in their opinions of

the old masters, yet their tastes differed materially on some points of art. A constant communion with pictures, the tints of which are subdued by time, no doubt tends to unfit the eye for the enjoyment of freshness, and Sir George thought Constable too daring in the modes he adopted to obtain this quality; while Constable saw that Sir George often allowed himself to be deceived by the effects of time, of accident, or by the tricks that are, far oftener than is generally supposed, played by dealers, to give mellowness to pictures; and in these matters each was disposed to set the other right. Sir George had placed a small landscape by Gaspar Poussin on his easel, close to a picture he was painting, and said, "Now, if I can match these tints I am sure to be right." "But suppose, Sir George," replied Constable, "Gaspar could rise from his grave, do you think he would know his own picture in its present state? or if he did, should we not find it difficult to persuade him that somebody had not smeared tar or cart grease over its surface, and then wiped it imperfectly off?" At another time Sir George recommended the colour of an old Cremona fiddle for the prevailing tone of everything, and this Constable answered by laying an old fiddle on the green lawn before the house. Again Sir George, who seemed to consider the autumnal tints necessary, at least to some part of a landscape, said, "Do you not find it very difficult to determine where to place your *brown tree?*" And the reply was, "Not in the least, for I never put such a thing into a picture."

In 1824 Constable established his reputation in Paris. In the previous year a Frenchman had purchased two of his pictures, "The Hay Cart" and "The Bridge," for £250, and the artist was commissioned to have seven pictures of a small size ready by August. "The large ones are to be exhibited at the Louvre," he writes, "and my purchasers say they are much looked for at Paris." Mr. Collins also wrote and told him that "at Paris they speak of only three English artists, namely, Wilkie, Lawrence, and Constable." The exhibition of these nine canvases, as Constable hoped, "melted the stony hearts" of the French painters, but the critics were angry with the artists for admiring such pictures. They acknowledged the effect to be "rich and powerful, and that the whole has the look of Nature, and the colour, their chief excellence, to be true and harmonious, but shall we admire works so unusual for these excellences alone? What then is to become of the great Poussin?" In spite of these criticisms, after the first few weeks of the exhibition at the Louvre the pictures were "removed from their original situations to a post of honour, two prime places in the principal room," and the artist had the further gratification of receiving a gold medal from the King.

During the remainder of his life Constable was never without more commissions than he was able to execute. But the welfare of his young family was a constant source of anxiety to him, and, though warned to get rid of anxiety as being more hurtful

to the stomach than arsenic, he seemed unable to throw off his cares and even designated the workhouse as his last home if he were unable to work harder. At the same time he much lamented the necessity of painting "pot-boilers," which prevented him from giving all his time to his larger landscapes. But in 1828, on the death of Mr. Bicknell, he came into a fortune of £20,000. In communicating this piece of news to Fisher he writes, "This I will settle on my wife and children, that I may do justice to his [Mr. Bicknell's] good opinion of me. It will make me happy, and I shall stand before a six-foot canvas with a mind at ease, thank God!"

The election of Constable as a full member of the Royal Academy was delayed until 1829, and even then the choice of a mere landscape-painter in preference to a number of historical painters who were also candidates seems to have surprised and annoyed the President, Sir Thomas Lawrence, who considered high art to be inseparable from historic art; and when Constable was paying his respects to the President immediately after his election, the latter intimated that under the circumstances he considered him peculiarly fortunate. Naturally Constable was of a different opinion, and he replied that he looked upon his election as an act of justice rather than favour. What occurred at this visit, as well as some ill-natured paragraphs in the newspapers, caused him to write to Leslie and ask him to give his opinion of his picture of "Hadleigh Castle," which he intended

John Constable

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL

to exhibit at the next exhibition. "I am grievously nervous about it," he writes, "as I *am still smarting under my election.*" This picture was Constable's principal one in the exhibition of 1829. It received many severe criticisms. On one of the varnishing days Chantrey told Constable its foreground was too cold, and taking his palette from him, he passed a strong glazing of asphaltum all over that part of the picture, and while this was going on Constable, who stood behind him in some degree of alarm, remarked, "There goes all my dew." But the great respect which he had for Chantrey's judgment in most matters did not prevent him carefully removing from the canvas all traces of the sculptor's handiwork. Skilled artist though he was, Constable was curiously ready to make alterations in his pictures on the advice of persons of very little judgment. While finishing the picture of the "Dell," he was one day beset with a great many suggestions from a very shallow source, and after adopting some of them, he felt inclined to make a stand, which he did by saying to his adviser, "Very true; but don't you see that I might go on and make this picture so good that it would be good for nothing." Once when asked if the picture on his easel was painted for any particular person, he replied, "Yes, sir, it is painted for a *very particular* person, the person for whom I have all my life painted."

During the last few years of his life Constable had several severe illnesses, which undoubtedly undermined his health more than he or his friends suspected.

But the end came suddenly, and he died after only a few hours' illness, on March 31, 1837, at the age of sixty-one.

As a painter he was no favourite of the public, and the following self-criticism found after his death among his papers shows how fully he understood their indifference and the cause: "My art flatters nobody by *imitation*, it courts nobody by *smoothness*, it tickles nobody by *petiteness*, it is without either *faldelal* or *fiddledeedee*; how then can I hope to be popular?"

CHAPTER XXIII

SIR DAVID WILKIE

1785–1841

SIR DAVID WILKIE was born at the manse of the parish of Cults, on the banks of Eden Water, in 1785, the third son of his father's third wife. David was a silent child, but from his earliest years he loved to draw figures on the sand by the stream-side, on the smooth stones of the field, and on the floor of the manse. These early scratchings had a leaning towards the humorous and the absurd. He could draw before he could read, and paint before he could spell. At school he was no lover of studies; he concerned himself little with questions of grammar and arithmetic, but turned the school into an academy of art, drawing heads of his companions on his slate, or with pen and ink, instead of attending to his lessons. When he grew into reputation with his bare-footed comrades, he set a value, it is said, on his drawings, and levied the reward of a pencil, or a marble, or a pen, from all whom he did not sketch of free will. "I mind him weel," said an old man from the banks of Eden Water, "and I mind his brithers too; but he was a quieter, kindlier lad than his elder brithers, and liked better to stand and look on at his companions

at their games than join in their folly. I think I see him now standing wi' his hands in his pouches! Ay, but he liked best to lie *a groufe* on the ground with his slate and pencil, making queer drawings!"

As he grew up the love of art grew with him. He became restless unless he had a pencil in his hand, and when he visited a neighbour, he generally left on the walls of the house an indication of his presence! It was well for him, perhaps, that he had no pictures to lead him from the path of his own originality, and no one of influence enough to overrule or misdirect his studies. His mind was left to find and pursue its own road to distinction, and while he was making the manse of Cults or the public road his rooms for study, and finding a fit subject for his pencil in an old man, an old chair, a girl milking a cow, a tinker watering his ass, he was all the time filling his memory as well as his sketch-book with materials for that fine series of national pictures he was so soon to begin, and in which Scotland's mind, heart, and manners are stamped so brightly. His father would doubtless have preferred some surer and less slippery path in life for his son than that of art, but by the time the boy was fourteen he was firmly resolved to become a painter, and in 1799, armed with a letter of introduction from the Earl of Leven, and some specimen drawings of his own, he called on George Thomson, the Secretary of the Trustees' Drawing Academy of Edinburgh. The first visit was not a success. The secretary looked at the drawings, read the Earl's letter,

and finally refused to admit the future Royal Academician as a student. But a second recommendation from Lord Leven overcame the secretary's scruples, and young Wilkie's name was entered on the books. His first efforts were disappointing. There is a pleasant little story told of a drawing of a foot which his father was proudly showing to one of the elders of Cults. "And what is it, sir?" inquired the elder. "It is a foot," replied the minister. "A foot," exclaimed the elder, amazed; "it's mair like a fluke (*i.e.* a flounder) than a foot." Burnet, one of his fellow-students, says of him, "When he came to our class he had much enthusiasm of a queer and silent kind, and very little knowledge of drawing," and adds that, though behindhand in skill, he surpassed from the first all his companions by the character with which he imbued his work.

In 1804 he finished his Edinburgh studies and returned to his father's house, where, with a chest of drawers for an easel, he immediately set to work on his first important composition, now known as "Pitlessie Fair." He introduced into this picture a large number of relations, neighbours, and friends, and when it was finished it created quite a sensation in the neighbourhood, people of all ranks coming to see it. The price he received for it was £40, and with twenty-five more and a few pictures and studies, he set sail from Leith for London, being then nineteen years of age. On his arrival he took rooms in the house of a coal merchant, and shortly afterwards

gained admission to the Academy schools. Something of his Edinburgh fame had come before him, and he soon made friends with Haydon the historical painter. In one of his letters home he says, "I have been of late painting a picture for the Earl of Mansfield, to be exhibited at the Royal Academy." The price named by Wilkie was fifteen guineas, to which the Earl neither consented nor objected. When in due course it was hung in the Academy, it became the picture of the year, and various offers were made by a crowd of would-be purchasers. Lord Mansfield, however, held to his bargain, but after some controversy, which became the talk of the town, he paid the artist the sum of thirty guineas. Encouraged by this triumph, Wilkie wrote home in jubilant vein, "My ambition," he says, "is got beyond all bounds, and I have the vanity to hope that Scotland will one day be proud to boast of your affectionate son, David Wilkie."

Sir George Beaumont followed Lord Mansfield in commissioning a picture from Wilkie, and the artist at once sketched in what proved to be one of his happiest efforts, the "Blind Fiddler," which is now in the National Gallery. It is a fine example of Wilkie's early manner, and, regarded as the work of a youth of twenty-two, is as astonishing as Paul Potter's "Young Bull," painted when that artist was twenty-three years of age. This picture attracted much notice at the Academy, and enabled Wilkie to increase his prices. His reputation was now firmly established, and from this time to the close of his

Sir David Wilkie *Hanfstaengl*

THE BLIND FIDDLER

life his career was one of unbroken prosperity. A pleasant little story is told about the painting of the "Blind Fiddler." Models were still an expense to be avoided if possible, and one day when Bannister the actor called on Wilkie, the artist was sitting on a low seat dressed as a woman, with a looking-glass before him, performing the part of model for himself. He was not in the least discomposed at being found in such a plight. Bannister gazed on him for a moment or so and said, "I need not introduce myself." "Truly no," said Wilkie; "I know you very well; but you see I can't move lest I spoil the folds of my petticoat. I am for the present an old woman, very much at your service."

Portraits, however, proved more remunerative than genre painting, and Wilkie appears to have had many sitters among the nobility, though, he says, they were seldom content with their likenesses.

In 1809 he began to keep a detailed diary, principally concerned with the progress of his pictures, but occasionally containing brief remarks about notable people he met. He speaks of meeting "the too celebrated Lady Hamilton; she had with her a girl supposed to be the daughter of Lord Nelson, a creature of great sweetness. . . . She asked me if I did not think her like her father. I said I had never seen that eminent person. Lady Hamilton is lusty, and tall, and of fascinating manner, but her features are bold and masculine!"

Wilkie was elected A.R.A. in 1809 when only

twenty-four years old, and in 1811 a full Academician. To the Academy he brought fame, acquired by works reflecting as in a mirror the manners, customs, and feelings of the people of Britain, in the invention of which neither party nor history could claim a share; the domestic character of the land was again in the hands of a consummate dramatist—the only one who had appeared since the days of Hogarth. "I wish you joy," wrote Sir George Beaumont to Wilkie on his election; "the honour is mutual." Sir George knew the world well enough to know that the Academy, by setting the stamp of its approbation on the artist, did for him what the honours of a college perform for those who venture into the paths of literature. "He who is not of the Academy," said Allan Cunningham, "the world scruples to regard as worthy; and he who is found in the fields of literature without a college licence is regarded as a poacher."

In 1812 Wilkie, to the great dissatisfaction of his brother Academicians—for at that time "one-man shows" were rare occurrences—hired a gallery in Pall Mall and exhibited a number of his pictures, many of which he borrowed from purchasers. But the speculation was a failure, partly owing to the heavy incidental expenses, and partly because one of his pictures was distrained for rent due by a former tenant, and Wilkie was obliged to buy it back.

In a letter to his sister, written in 1813, the artist describes his experiences as a member of the Hanging Committee of the Royal Academy. "I have been

employed about it," he writes, "with two other Academicians for a month. . . . I found it a very severe labour for me at first, but it afterwards became very agreeable, and has improved my health amazingly. . . . We had many a squabble, as you may suppose, during the arrangement about who should have the best places, but as no one was admitted, this was all confined to ourselves, and although we had the interests of all the members to balance and take care of, as well as those of our own particular friends, and those of the many poor fellows who had no friends, we have adjusted them all so well that there is not a single complaint. The first persons we thought of were our own three selves, as you may suppose; and, acting on this principle, my picture of "Blindman's Buff" was accordingly placed in the principal centre of the great room."

Accompanied by Haydon, Wilkie paid his first visit to Paris in 1814, journeying thither by Dieppe and Normandy. Though Paris at that time was filled with all the nations of the earth, the greatest oddity in it, so Haydon wrote, was David Wilkie. "His horrible French; his strange tottering gait, feeble, pale look; his carrying about his prints to make bargains with print-sellers; his resolution never to leave restaurants till he got his change right to a centime; his long disputes about sous and demi-sous with the *dame du comptoir*, whilst madame tried to cheat him and pressed her pretty ringed fingers on his arm without making the least impression . . . were worthy of Molière. But there is a simplicity in his manners, a

soundness and originality in his thinking, which makes him an instructive companion. . . . There was hardly a day but we had a dispute, and yet we were always better pleased with each other's society than with the society of others."

After a tour of six weeks he returned home, declaring that he was more astonished than instructed by his visit to Paris. The manners were little to his liking, the works of art less, and he was not sufficiently acquainted with the language to enter heartily into the humours of the people. From his journal, however, we gather that he was impressed by the draughtsmanship of the French painters, and thought that a little more correctness in drawing at the Academy would have done no harm.

It was one of his settled maxims that a price should not be fixed for a picture before it was finished, "for," said he, "it may, from being handled in a happy mood, or being fuller of character than at first contemplated, be worth double the fixed price; or it may chance to be less fertile of interest when completed than when it presented itself at first to the fancy, and not be worth more than half the proposed sum; either way the price is unfair, and the customer or painter is wronged." Sometimes he did not fix a price even when he sent a picture to an exhibition. This was so in the case of "Distraining for Rent," which, according to Leslie, is one of the noblest and truest of his pictures. It was sent to the British Institution, and though several intending purchasers appeared, the

Directors of the Institution stepped in and acquired it at the great price of 600 guineas.

A year or two later Wilkie again found himself on the Continent, his tour including a journey through Flanders and Holland. He also visited the battle-field of Waterloo, after receiving a commission from the Duke of Wellington to paint a picture connected with that great victory. The Duke himself suggested the subject—a number of soldiers of various descriptions seated upon the benches at the door of a public-house, with porter and tobacco, talking over their old stories; and Wilkie, some six years after receiving the commission, completed the well-known "Chelsea Pensioners Reading the Gazette of the Battle of Waterloo." It was exhibited in 1822, and was so popular with the public that it had to be protected by a special rail. When the picture was sent to Apsley House, Wilkie was asked to call there. He found the Duke in his study, a gloomy little room with a single window, on the ground floor, facing Piccadilly. Here the Duke began to count out in bank-notes the sum agreed upon for the painting—one thousand guineas. "Wouldn't it save your Grace trouble to give me a draft on your bankers for the amount?" Wilkie suggested. "Yes," replied the Duke, "but I don't want my bankers to know I have been such a d—d fool as to give one thousand guineas for a picture."

When Sir Thomas Lawrence died in 1830, and before a new President of the Royal Academy had

been elected, the King named Wilkie his Painter-in-Ordinary—a public way of intimating a wish that his brethren should elect him President. But at the election only a single vote was recorded in favour of one who, so far as fame and genius and honesty go in the estimate of merit, stood second to none in the ranks of British art. Martin Shee, a painter of mediocre talent, was elected President by a large majority, thus establishing a precedent which has since been generally observed, viz. that the highest station is awarded to the readiest speaker rather than to the finest genius. Haydon regarded this appointment as one of the most fatal blows ever inflicted on the dignity of the Academy. Shee, nevertheless, made an excellent President, for he was a man "of great plausibility; a speechifying, colloquial, well-informed, pleasant fellow."

In 1836 the honour of knighthood was conferred upon Wilkie. He bore his new honours meekly, though no doubt he was proud of a distinction, as Allan Cunningham writes, "wrung from the hand of a country tardy beyond all others in rewarding talent, and profuse to a proverb in squandering titles on men who crawl to wealth through the common sewers of speculation or political intrigue."

The removal of the Royal Academy from Somerset House to new galleries in Trafalgar Square took place in 1838. "The new rooms," says Wilkie in a letter to William Collins, R.A., "do not decrease our difficulties—claims increase with the size of the rooms,

and we have near six hundred crossed and doubtful. Only one sculptor member exhibits, viz. Baily. There is great cry and little wool, after the clamour of sculptors for a better exhibition-room."

In the autumn of 1840 Sir David, accompanied by William Woodburn, set out on a journey to the East. For this rumour assigned sundry reasons, but we may say with certainty that he went with enlarging notions of his art, that he was not encumbered with royal commissions, and that he hoped amendment to his health by a visit to a land endeared to his heart by a thousand associations, and all of them devout. Wilkie and his companion first made their way to Holland, visited the galleries of Rotterdam and Amsterdam, and then turned their steps to Munich, resolved to penetrate to Constantinople by following the course of the Danube, and from thence, if war and plague permitted, to waft themselves to Syria, and conclude their tour by dropping down into Egypt, with memory and sketch-book full of Jerusalem, its holy hills and memorable valleys.

It was on his return journey that Sir David fell ill and died. The last letter which he wrote was full of hope and a subdued anxiety to be again at home. In his letter he directed his sister to put the house in order for his reception, and to assure his friends how glad he would be to see them yet once more. Though far from well he made no reference to the subject of his health, but wrote of his friends, his art, and the Royal Academy. He set sail in May 1841 on the

Orient steamer from Alexandria, and on the voyage to Malta expressed himself as having improved in his general health while on board. He became ill at Malta, it was supposed, from eating fruit, and died shortly after the vessel had left Gibraltar. The authorities there would not allow the body to be landed for burial owing to quarantine regulations, and so, on June 1, 1841, engines were stopped in mid-ocean, and the body of Sir David Wilkie was committed to the deep. So lived and died one of the most original, vigorous, and varied of our English painters. He was the darling artist of the people, learned or illiterate, as he spoke to all degrees of knowledge and to all varieties of taste, for he was one who believed that no one had a right to maintain the mysteries of art; indeed, with certain modifications he held that talent and taste were the sole mysteries. His instructions were as plain and clear as either his writings or pictures; meaning was the first thing he demanded. "What is this?" he said one day to a student. "It is a man, sir." "Yes, I see it is a man; yet I seldom see a man utterly idle with hands or with head; now your man is doing nothing with his hands; what is he doing with his head?" "He is thinking, sir, what he will do with his hands," was the not unskilful reply. "Now, young man," said Wilkie, with a grave smile, "your answer is naught; you have made this man because you can draw well; but you should never draw anything with the hope of others finding out a meaning for it." The students loved him for the

mildness of his manners—he had nothing abrupt or stern about him—and also for his great attention. "Really," he used to say, "it is wonderful how young men will trifle with time; they will squander hours, days, nay weeks, on the merest trifling, neglecting the study of an art which, even with the most gifted, requires a lifetime to attain."

CHAPTER XXIV

J. M. W. TURNER

1775–1851

JOSEPH MALLORD WILLIAM TURNER was born on April 23, 1775, in a house in Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, the ground floor of which contained the dingy shop of his father, who was a barber. Tintoretto was the son of a dyer; Andrea del Sarto and the Caracci were the sons of tailors; Caravaggio was the son of a mason; Correggio, of a labourer; Guido, of a musician; Domenichino, of a rope-maker; and Albano, of a silk mercer. Turner, therefore, had ample historical justification, if he needed any, for his descent from a hairdresser.

An anecdote fortunately has been preserved which gives us the very starting-point of the boy's art life. It was probably in the year 1780 that the barber went to the house of a rich silversmith, Mr. Tomkinson, to dress that gentleman's hair. He took his son with him, and while the father was busily at work, the boy sat in a corner staring with all the might of his bright blue eyes at a silver salver (emblazoned with the Tomkinson arms) which leant against the wainscot. A certain rampant lion especially astonished him, and when he got home he produced a tolerable sketch

of it from memory. From that time his fate was fixed, and henceforth when old friends, looking up from under the glittering razor, mumbled through obstructive lather, "Well, Turner, have you settled yet what William is to be?" the barber would reply, "It's all settled, sir; William is going to be a painter."

In after life Turner himself used to say that a particular mezzotint after Vandervelde had made him a painter. It was an upright, a single large vessel running before the wind, and bearing up bravely against the waves. That determined his genius to marine painting; subsequent boyish visits made him love English rivers; and later trips to Margate made him love Kent and the sea. His nascent genius broke out at the sight of an engraved salver, but after all this fine Vandervelde was the spark which lit the train. "Evidently a genius," was the inspiriting reflection of the father, as he ran about among the hot tongs and frizzled them clean in thin curling paper.

The boy was reasonably well educated. He went to school at Brentford, at Margate, and in Soho; and further, he is known to have attended a drawing-school in St. Martin's Lane, where the fashionable Paul Sandby, R.A., used to teach. Fired by Sandby's drawings, Turner busied himself at home, colouring prints for a print-seller at a shilling or two apiece. Meanwhile the barber's window exhibited little copies of Sandby and Dayes, ticketed at three shillings each, which were bought by passing amateurs. He was also

employed touching up amateurs' drawings, and adding skies and backgrounds to architects' designs.

When Turner was about twenty-one, an event occurred which undoubtedly affected his mind for ever. He fell in love with the sister of one of his schoolfellows at Margate. His affection was returned, and the young couple became engaged. Vows of fidelity were exchanged, and Turner departed on a distant tour, leaving with the lady, as a pledge, his portrait painted by his own hand, and promising to write frequently. For some reason the girl's step-mother intercepted these letters, and after two years the poor girl, feeling herself forsaken, and wishing to escape from an unhappy home, yielded to the importunities of another suitor. The wedding day was fixed, when, within a week, Turner suddenly arrived on the scene. He had written constantly, and though he had received no replies, his faith in his fiancée had remained unshaken. He still loved her, and he urged her in the most passionate terms to break off the alliance she was about to form. But the lady, reckoning her honour involved, pronounced mournfully that it was then too late. Entreaties and adjurations were unavailing, and Turner left her in bitter grief, declaring that he would never marry, and that his life henceforth was hopeless and blighted. Incalculable was the harm this early and sore disappointment wrought upon Turner's nature. He gradually began to change—not into the misanthrope, for that he never was—but into the self-concentrated, reserved money-

maker. It contributed towards souring the natural generosity of his character; yet it had the effect of intensifying his passionate devotion to art, for his love of it for its own sake was stimulated by his love of it for the money's sake. Let us not forget that habits of thrift and accumulation had been early instilled into his mind by the scraping old barber. "How can you wonder?" Turner used to say sometimes to his old friends. "Dad never praised me for anything but saving a halfpenny!"

Of Turner's extraordinary rapidity Mr. Ruskin tells the following interesting story:

"There is a drawing in the Fawkes's collection of a man-of-war taking in stores; it is of the usual size of those of the England series, about 16 inches by 11. It does not appear one of the most highly finished, but it is still further removed from slightness. The hull of a first-rate occupies nearly one-half of the picture on the right, her bows towards the spectator seen in sharp perspective from stem to stern, with all her port-holes, guns, anchors, and lower rigging elaborately detailed. There are two ships of the line in the middle distance drawn with equal precision, a noble breezy sea dancing against their broad bows, full of delicate drawing in its waves; a store-ship beneath the hull of the larger vessel, and several other boats, and a complicated cloudy sky. It might appear no small exertion of mind to draw the detail of all this shipping, down to the smallest ropes, from memory, in the drawing-

room of a mansion in the middle of Yorkshire, even if considerable time had been given for the effort. But Mr. Fawkes sat beside the painter from the first stroke to the last. Turner took a piece of blank paper one morning after breakfast, outlined his ships, finished the drawing in three hours, and went out to shoot."

Turner never sketched much in oil; he always got the colour too brown, as he once told his travelling companion, Mr. Munro. He generally preferred the pencil-point, writing in here and there the colours and effects. "In this respect he had," writes Mr. Ruskin, "some peculiar views induced by early associations. His first conceptions of mountain scenery seem to have been taken from Yorkshire; and its rounded hills, far-winding rivers, and broken limestone seems to have formed a type in his mind, to which he sought as far as might be obtained some correspondent imagery in all other landscapes. Hence he almost always preferred to have a precipice *low down* on the hill-side, rather than near the top. . . . This decided love of the slope or bank above the wall, rather than below it, is one of Turner's most marked idiosyncrasies."

In 1796 Turner left his father's humble abode in Maiden Lane and took a house in Hand Court, four years later removing to No. 64 Harley Street. In the same year he was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy, at which he had been an annual exhibitor for ten years, and in 1802, the year of his first foreign tour (the French war having previously de-

J. M. W. Turner

SNOWSTORM: HANNIBAL AND HIS ARMY CROSSING THE ALPS

barred him from travel), he attained the distinction of Royal Academician. This dignity seems to have aroused his ambition to the full, for in the same year he exhibited his first oil pictures, one of which was "Kilchurn Castle with the Ben Cruachan Mountains." His power over his new materials was at once acknowledged.

We so seldom succeed in obtaining glimpses of Turner on his foreign journeys that part of the following characteristic letter to George Jones, R.A., is well worth insertion :—

"DEAR JONES," he writes from Rome on October 13, 1821,—"Two months nearly in getting to this Terra Pictura, *and at work;* but the length of time is my own fault. I must see the south of France, which almost knocked me up, the heat was so intense, particularly at Nismes and Avignon; and until I got a plunge into the sea at Marseilles, I felt so weak that nothing but the change of scene kept me onwards to my distant point. Genoa, and all the sea-coast from Nice to Spezzia, is remarkably rugged and fine; so is Massa. Tell that fat fellow Chantrey that I did think of him, *then* (but not the first or the last time) of the thousands he had made out of those marble craigs which only afforded me a sour bottle of wine and a sketch; but he deserves everything which is good, though he did give me a fit of the spleen at Carrara. . . . Remember me to all friends. So God bless you. Adieu. J. M. W. TURNER."

One day Mr. Jones, discussing the merits of Turner's "Bay of Baiæ" with a traveller who had recently been there, was surprised to find that half the scene was sheer invention, upon which Jones playfully wrote on the frame, "SPLENDIDE MENDAX." When the inscription caught his eye Turner only laughed, but the inscription remained on the frame of the picture for years; Turner never removed it.

Of all his tours, the amplest records pertain to the one he took with Mr. Munro in 1836. Turner, as Mr. Munro relates, enjoyed himself in his own sort of Diogenes way, but he disliked teasing questions as to how he got this or that colour. On one occasion, in the valley of Aosta, he was dissatisfied with a sketch, which he altered and sponged till the drawing got a sort of green-whiteness about it, which was not pleasant. He became quite fretful, and abused colour sketching, saying he could have done twice as much with the pencil. His first inquiry in the morning, when they started to sketch, was always, "Have you got the sponge?"" It was with this implement that he obtained many of his misty and aerial effects. Turner never rhapsodised about scenery, but at some distance from his companion—generally much higher—applied himself to work in a silent, concentrated frame of mind. The superior elevation he required for the purpose of obtaining greater distance and more of a bird's-eye view. The sketches were rapid, and with the aid of his tremendous memory were completed subsequently, at leisure, at

the inn. He had a horror of what he said Wilson called, "being too mappy." He used no maul-stick; his touch was so sure and decisive, and his materials were of the rudest—brushes worn away to single hairs, and now thrice as valuable as they were when new.

Turner once called upon Thomson of Duddingston, by appointment probably, for the express purpose of seeing the painter-parson's works. Thomson, of course, was delighted to receive the great landscape painter, and naturally expected his own pictures would receive some notice and even praise; but after Turner had taken a survey, the only remark he made was, "You beat me in frames." Some of Thomson's admirers had gone so far as to suggest that at times he was equal to Turner. This Turner may have heard, and felt piqued at the fulsome flattery.

Once, when he was making sketches for the "Provincial Antiquities," in the company of Cadell, the Edinburgh bookseller, as they passed Norham, Turner took off his hat and made a low bow to the ruins. Observing this strange act of homage, Cadell exclaimed, "What the devil are you about now?" "Oh," was the reply, "I made a drawing or painting of Norham several years since. It took, and from that day to this I have had as much to do as my hands could execute."

Turner was often curiously reluctant to part with his work. Once a rich Birmingham manufacturer, Gillott by name, introduced himself to the painter,

and stated that he had come to buy. "Don't want to sell," or some such rebuff, was the answer. The manufacturer then drew from his pocket a silvery fragile bundle of bank-notes, about £5000 worth. "Mere paper," observed Turner with grim humour, a little softened however, and evidently enjoying the joke. "To be bartered for *mere* canvas," replied Gillott, waving his hand at the "Building of Carthage" and its companions. This tone of cool depreciation seemed to have a happy effect, and finally Gillott departed with some £5000 worth of Turner's pictures.

A story is also told of a wealthy Liverpool merchant who offered to buy the whole stock of paintings, drawings, and engravings in Turner's house in Queen Anne Street for £100,000. Confident that his offer would be accepted, he asked for the key of the house in order that he might forthwith cart off the valuables. But Turner said, "No, sir; I have refused a similar offer before," and well he might, for even then the stock was worth far more than that in the market, and in the hands of a monopolist might have realised any sum. "I'll make it guineas," was the seductive invitation; but it was resolutely declined. He had willed the pictures to the nation. The week in which Turner sold a picture he invariably wore a look of dejection and oppression; and when pressed with inquiries as to the reason, he would sorrowfully exclaim, "I've lost one of my children this week."

Turner was neither an ascetic, nor a miser, nor a

misanthrope. He loved his friends with deep tenderness; he left the nation that neglected him £140,000; and he was one of the most sociable of men. Nor was he unaccustomed to the society of men of wealth and rank. Lord Egremont delighted to have him at his table; Lord Harewood knew him well in the easy intercourse of life. At Royal Academy dinners or private meetings he was the gayest and merriest of the band. He was fond too of water excursions; and when down in Yorkshire with his old friend Mr. Fawkes of Farnley, he shot grouse and fished with the enjoyment of a boy. The unpleasing part of his character was his suspiciousness. "In early life," as Mr. G. Jones testifies, "every hand extended to him sought to profit by his talent at the smallest expense possible; he encountered extortions of time and work; he discovered that he was unjustly used to fill the purses of others rather than his own. He became by degrees so suspicious and sensitive that he dreaded the motives of all by whom he was surrounded."

Turner was too reserved to be often praising, but he never, according to Thornbury, uttered a word of critical disparagement or detraction. Stothard, however, he frequently praised, for he loved the beautiful simplicity of "the English Watteau," as he was truly called. But he did not like either Etty or Constable, and Constable certainly had no taste for Turner's work. Of Girtin, the companion and rival of his youth, Turner was never tired of speaking. "If Girtin had lived," he used to say with true generosity,

"I should have starved." All through his life, the sight of one of Girtin's yellow drawings made his eyes sparkle, and often would he earnestly declare that he would lose a finger willingly could he learn how to produce such effects.

Mr. Lupton, the engraver, says of him that he "was a man who not only considered that time was money, but he acted upon it, and worked from morning till night; indeed, it would be correct to say he laboured from sunrise to sunset. He would often ask his brother-artists, sarcastically, if they ever saw the sun rise. . . . In the sale of his pictures he always took a high moral position. When asked the price of a picture by a purchaser, for instance, he would say, 'Two hundred guineas.' The reply has been, 'No; I will give you one hundred and seventy-five.' 'No; I won't take it.' On the morrow the applicant for the picture has come again. 'Well, Mr. Turner, I suppose I must give you your price for that picture: the two hundred guineas.' Mr. Turner has been known to reply, 'Ah, that was my price yesterday, but I have changed my mind also; the price of the picture to-day is two hundred and twenty-five guineas.' The applicant went away, and perhaps the next day was glad to have the picture at another increased price."

The generosity of Turner is well exemplified by the fact that on at least two occasions when on the Hanging Committee he removed pictures of his own from the walls of the Academy in order to make room for

PEACE: BURIAL AT SEA OF THE BODY OF SIR DAVID WILKIE

(After the painting by J. M. W. Turner: No. 528 in the National Gallery, London)

others which had either been crowded out or to which a less favourable position had been assigned. Again, when his picture of "Cologne" was exhibited in the year 1826, it was hung between two portraits by Sir Thomas Lawrence. The sky of Turner's picture being exceedingly bright, it had a most injurious effect on the colour of the two portraits, and Lawrence naturally felt mortified, and openly complained of the position. At a private view on the morning of the opening of the exhibition, a friend of Turner's who had seen the "Cologne" in all its splendour led a group of expectant critics up to it. To his consternation the golden sky had changed to a dun colour. "Turner, Turner, what have you been doing to your picture?" he cried. "Oh," muttered Turner, in a low voice, "poor Lawrence was so unhappy! It's only lamp-black. It'll all wash off after the exhibition!" He had actually passed a wash of lamp-black in water-colour over the sky, and utterly spoiled his picture for the time in order to gratify Lawrence.

Mr. Alaric Watts relates that Turner once offered, to the amazement of the whole body of Royal Academicians, to purchase cloth for re-covering the seats in the room where one of his pictures was hung. "No one divined the reason for this apparent generosity and most unaccountable act. He was always very particular that everything should aid the effect of his pictures, even to the hanging of those placed around them. To keep up this colour, he would continue painting on his pictures after they were hung, during

the varnishing days. On one occasion, however, he was checkmated; and as he could not produce the effect he wanted by paint, he set about accomplishing it by policy. He studied how it might be done by a foil, and soon found that, if he got a mass of bright red in the foreground, his object would be accomplished. 'The seats are not fit to sit on,' protested Turner to the hangers; 'they are very shabby; they must be re-covered.' When the authorities demurred Turner finally exclaimed, 'I'll do it at my own expense,' but in the end the seats were re-covered with the cloth chosen by Turner at the expense of the Academy. His deep design was then made manifest. He placed the foil in the foreground of his picture, and the chuckle of satisfaction in which he inwardly indulged betrayed the whole secret."

There is no doubt some justification for the character of meanness which is often attributed to Turner. We have seen how generous he could be, but the following story shows that he could also be parsimonious.

A friend of Sir Thomas Lawrence, who resided at Clapham Common, commissioned Lawrence to order of Turner a picture at a most liberal price. When it was finished, both Lawrence and Turner were invited to dinner to see to its proper hanging. Lawrence was otherwise engaged, but Turner arrived with the picture. When the ladies retired after dinner his host said, "We will now to business. Excuse me for a moment while I write you out a cheque." The

cheque was written and handed to Turner; but instead of putting it into his pocket, he kept turning it over, eyeing first the gentleman, and then the cheque. Apprehensive of error, the gentleman observed, "I have made it guineas, I believe? It was to be guineas, was it not?" "Yes, the guineas are right enough," was the gruff return, "but I paid six shillings for the coach, and that's not down!"

Turner was not an exhibitor at the Royal Academy of 1851. This was a sign of declining health which his friends did not fail to notice with alarm. He came, however, to the private view, when those who saw him thought him breaking up fast. It was evident that he could not live the year out. No longer the sturdy, dogged, strange being of old, he was now the broken, decrepit old man.

Many of the Academicians knew that Turner latterly had another home besides the murky house in Queen Anne Street, but they did not dare openly to express their curiosity. More care was evidently taken of him; he was more cleanly and tidy than in former years; he even ventured on a red velvet waistcoat, and his linen had more daylight whiteness about it than it had had for years.

There was one, however, who mourned and wondered at Turner's absence from Queen Anne Street far more than any of his other friends could have deplored, and speculated upon his withdrawal from their circle, and that was poor Mrs. Danby, the guardian of his house, the servant who had for so many long

years of rain and sunshine been faithful to his interests. She was deeply troubled by Turner's mysterious disappearance; she was sure that he was ill, but yet knew not how to find him amid the labyrinths of London. At last when brushing an old coat of his she found a letter which revealed his hiding-place in Chelsea. She instantly communicated her information to Mr. Harpur, who subsequently was one of Turner's executors, and Harpur hastened to see Turner, but was only in time to see him sinking fast. He died with the winter morning sun shining upon his face as he lay in bed. The sun of the "Building of Carthage" and of the "Frosty Morning" still shone on with unfading brightness, but the painter who had so often essayed to render its globe of living flame lay lifeless in an upper room of the river-side cottage. He was buried in St. Paul's between Reynolds and Barry.

Of Turner's reasons for thus secreting himself at Chelsea like a runaway bankrupt numerous explanations have been advanced, but the most popular version of the matter is as follows:—

Requiring change of air for his health, Turner went to Chelsea in search of lodgings. These he found at a moderate cost at a little cottage not far from the present Battersea Bridge, which looked—and indeed still looks—on the river, and had a railed-in roof, from which he could observe sky effects. The landlady, seeing a little, thick-set, shabby man, asked him for "reference"; which demand provoked the angry retort, "My good woman, I'll buy the house outright."

Next she proposed to draw up an agreement, which he parried by exhibiting a roll of bank-notes, and offering to pay in advance. This was most satisfactory to his mystery-loving nature. Another difficulty, however, awaited him. The landlady wanted her proposed lodger's name; "in case, sir, any gentleman should call, you know." "Name?" was the puzzled exclamation. "What is *your* name?" "My name is Mrs. Booth." "Then I'm Mr. Booth," said Turner, and by that name he was known there. But, unfortunately for the story, he did not carry about rolls of bank-notes which he could flourish. All that was found in his pockets after his death was a solitary half-crown, black from its long seclusion in a grimy, unvisited pocket.

He had amassed a fortune of about £140,000, and his will occasioned a Chancery suit, which lasted for four years, the documents being several tons in weight. A compromise was eventually effected between all the parties, according to which the real estate went to the heir-at-law, the pictures to the National Gallery, £1000 for the erection of a monument in St. Paul's Cathedral, £20,000 to the Royal Academy, and the remainder to the next-of-kin.

It was reported that Turner had declared his intention of being buried in his "Carthage," the picture now in the National Gallery. To Chantrey he said, "I have appointed you one of my executors. Will you promise to see me rolled up in it?" "Yes," said Chantrey, "and I promise you also that, as soon

as you are buried, I will see you taken up and unrolled." This was very like Chantrey; and the story was so generally believed that, when Turner died, and Dean Milman heard he was to be buried in St. Paul's, he said, "I will not read the service over him if he is wrapped up in that picture."

APPENDIX

LIST OF AUTHORITIES

CHAP.		
I.	Sir Antony Vandyck . .	*De Piles' "Lives of the Painters," Walpole's "Anecdotes of Painting," and other sources*
II.	Sir Peter Lely	*Walpole and other sources*
III.	Sir Godfrey Kneller . .	*De Piles and Walpole*
IV.	William Hogarth . . .	*Cunningham's "British Painters," and other sources*
V.	Richard Wilson . . .	*Edwards's "Anecdotes of Painters," Smith's "Nollekens and his Times," and other sources*
VI.	Sir Joshua Reynolds . .	*Cunningham*
VII.	Thomas Gainsborough .	*Cunningham, Edwards, Leslie's Handbook, and other sources*
VIII.	George Romney . . .	*Romney's Memoirs, Hayley's "Life," and Cunningham*
IX.	John Copley.	*Cunningham*
X.	Benjamin West . . .	*Galt's "Life of West"*
XI.	Richard Cosway . . .	*Cunningham*
XII.	Henry Fuseli	*Cunningham*
XIII.	James Barry	*Cunningham and Edwards*
XIV.	James Northcote . . .	*Cunningham and other sources*
XV.	Thomas Rowlandson .	*Angelo's "Reminiscences," Grego's "Life," and other sources*
XVI.	Sir Henry Raeburn . .	*Cunningham*
XVII.	John Hoppner	*Cunningham*
XVIII.	John Opie	*Cunningham*

CHAP.		
XIX.	George Morland . . .	*Dawe's "Life," and other sources*
XX.	John Crome	*Dawson Turner's "Memoir," Wodderspoon's "John Crome and his Works," and other sources*
XXI.	Sir Thomas Lawrence .	*Cunningham and other sources*
XXII.	John Constable . . .	*Leslie's "Life," and other sources*
XXIII.	Sir David Wilkie . . .	*Cunningham*
XXIV.	J. M. W. Turner . . .	*Thornbury's "Life and Correspondence of Turner," and other sources*

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